AN APPEAL TO ALL THAT DOUBT THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL - AN HUMBLE, EARNEST, AND AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY

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by William Law To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:

AN HUMBLE, EARNEST, AND AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY BY WILLIAM LAW, M.A.

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As this ADDRESS makes its appearance after the decease of the author, it cannot be thought improper to inform the reader, that the whole was sent to the press by himself, except a few pages, the last of which was wrote by him not many days before his death.

AN ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY

The reason of my humbly and affectionately addressing this discourse to the clergy, is not because it treats of things not of common concern to all Christians, but chiefly to invite and induce them, as far as I can, to the serious perusal of it; and because whatever is essential to Christian salvation, if either neglected, overlooked, or mistaken by them, is of the saddest consequence both to themselves and the churches in which they minister. I say essential to salvation, for I would not turn my own thoughts, or call the attention of Christians, to anything but the one thing needful, the one thing essential and only available to our rising out of our fallen state, and becoming, as we were at our creation, an holy offspring of God, and real partakers of the divine nature.

If it be asked, What this one thing is? It is the SPIRIT OF GOD brought again to his FIRST POWER OF LIFE IN US. Nothing else is wanted by us, nothing else intended for us, by the Law, the prophets, and the gospel.

Nothing else is, or can be effectual, to the making sinful man become again a godly creature.

Everything else, be it what it will, however glorious and divine in outward appearance, everything that angels, men, churches, or reformations, can do for us, is dead and helpless, but so far as it is the immediate work of the Spirit of God breathing and living in it.

All scripture bears full witness to this truth, and the end and design of all that is written, is only to call us back from the spirit of Satan, the flesh, and the world, to be again under full dependence upon, and obedience to the Spirit of God, who out of free love and thirst after our souls, seeks to have his first power of life in us. When this is done, all is done that the scripture can do for us. Read what chapter, or doctrine of scripture you will, be ever so delighted with it, it will leave you as poor, as empty and unreformed as it found you, unless it be a delight that proceeds from, and has turned you wholly and solely to the Spirit of God, and strengthened your union with and dependence upon him. For love and delight in matters of scriptures, whilst it is only a delight that is merely human, however specious and saintlike it may appear, is but the self-love of fallen Adam, and can have no better a nature, till it proceeds from the inspiration of God, quickening his own life and nature within us, which alone can have or give forth a godly love. For if it be an immutable truth, that "no man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," it must be a truth equally immutable, that no one can have any one Christ-like temper or power of goodness but so far, and in such degree, as he is immediately led and governed by the Holy Spirit.

The grounds and reasons of which are as follow.

All possible goodness that either can be named, or is nameless, was in God from all eternity, and must to all eternity be inseparable from him; it can be nowhere but where God is. As therefore before God created anything, it was certainly true that there was but one that was good, so it is just the same truth, after God has created innumerable hosts of blessed and holy and heavenly beings, that there is but one that is good, and that is God.

All that can be called goodness, holiness, divine tempers, heavenly affections, etc., in the creatures, are no more their own, or the growth of their created powers, than they were their own before they were created.

But all that is called divine goodness and virtue in the creature is nothing else, but the one goodness of God manifesting a birth and discovery of itself in the creature, according as its created nature is fitted to receive it.

This is the unalterable state between God and the creature. Goodness for ever and ever can only belong to God, as essential to him and inseparable from him, as his own unity.

God could not make the creature to be great and glorious in itself; this is as impossible, as for God to create beings into a state of independence on himself. "The heavens," saith David, "declare the glory of God"; and no creature, any more than the heavens, can declare any other glory but that of God. And as well might it be said, that the firmament shows forth its own handiwork, as that a holy divine or heavenly creature shows forth its own natural power.

But now, if all that is divine, great, glorious, and happy, in the spirits, tempers, operations, and enjoyments of the creature, is only so much of the greatness, glory, majesty, and blessedness of God, dwelling in it, and giving forth various births of his own triune life, light, and love, in and through the manifold forms and capacities of the creature to receive them, then we may infallibly see the true ground and nature of all true religion, and when and how we may be said to fulfill all our religious duty to God. For the creature's true religion, is its rendering to God all that is God's, it is its true continual acknowledging all that which it is, and has, and enjoys, in and from God. This is the one true religion of all intelligent creatures, whether in heaven, or on earth; for as they all have but one and the same relation to God, so though ever so different in their several births, states or offices, they all have but one and the same true religion, or right behavior towards God. Now the one relation, which is the ground of all true religion, and is one and the same between God and all intelligent creatures, is this, it is a total unalterable dependence upon God, an immediate continual receiving of every kind, and degree of goodness, blessing and happiness, that ever was, or can be found in them, from God alone. The highest angel has nothing of its own that it can offer unto God, no more light, love, purity, perfection, and glorious hallelujahs, that spring from itself, or its own powers, than the

poorest creature upon earth. Could the angel see a spark of wisdom, goodness, or excellence, as coming from, or belonging to itself, its place in heaven would be lost, as sure as Lucifer lost his. But they are ever abiding flames of pure love, always ascending up to and uniting with God, for this reason, because the wisdom, the power, the glory, the majesty, the love, and goodness of God alone, is all that they see, and feel, and know, either within or without themselves. Songs of praise to their heavenly Father are their ravishing delight, because they see, and know, and feel, that it is the breath and Spirit of their heavenly Father that sings and rejoices in them. Their adoration in spirit and in truth never ceases, because they never cease to acknowledge the ALL of God; the ALL of God in the whole creation. This is the one religion of heaven, and nothing else is the truth of religion on earth.

The matter therefore plainly comes to this, nothing can do, or be, the good of religion to the intelligent creature, but the power and presence of God really and essentially living and working in it. But if this be the unchangeable nature of that goodness and blessedness which is to be had from our religion, then of all necessity, the creature must have all its religious goodness as wholly and solely from God's immediate operation, as it had its first goodness at its creation. And it is the same impossibility for the creature to help itself to that which is good and blessed in religion, by any contrivance, reasonings, or workings of its own natural powers, as to create itself. For the creature, after its creation, can no more take anything to itself that belongs to God, than it could take it, before it was created. And if truth forces us to hold, that the natural powers of the creature could only come from the one power of God, the same truth should surely more force us to confess, that that which comforts, that which enlightens, that which blesses, which gives peace, joy, goodness, and rest to its natural powers, can be had in no other way, nor by any other thing, but from God's immediate holy operation found in it.

Now the reason why no work of religion, but that which is begun, continued, and carried on by the living operation of God in the creature, can have any truth, goodness, or divine blessing in it, is because nothing can in truth seek God, but that which comes from God. Nothing can in truth find God as its good, but that which has the nature of God living in it; like can only rejoice in like; and therefore no religious service of the creature can have any truth, goodness, or blessing in it, but that which is done in the creature, in, and through, and by a principle and power of the divine nature begotten and breathing forth in it all holy tempers, affections, and adorations.

All true religion is, or brings forth, an essential union and communion of the spirit of the creature with the Spirit of the creator: God in it, and it in God, one life, one light, one love. The Spirit of God first gives, or sows the seed of divine union in the soul of every man; and religion is that by which it is quickened, raised, and brought forth to a fullness and growth of a life in God. Take a similitude of this, as follows. The beginning, or seed of animal breath, must first be born in the creature from the spirit of this world. In like manner, divine faith, hope, love, and resignation to God, are in the religious life its acts of respiration, which, so long as they are true, unite God and the creature in the same living and essential manner, as animal respiration unites the breath of the animal with the breath of this world.

Now as no animal could begin to respire, or unite with the breath of this world, but because it has its beginning to breathe begotten in it from the air of this world, so it is equally certain, that no creature, angel or man, could begin to be religious, or breathe forth the divine affections of faith, love, and desire towards God, but because a living seed of these divine affections was by the Spirit or (sic) God first begotten in it. And as a tree or plant can only grow and fructify by the same power that first gave birth to the seed, so faith, and hope, and love towards God, can only grow and fructify by the same power, that begot the first seed of them in the soul. Therefore divine immediate inspiration and divine religion are inseparable in the nature of the thing.

Take away inspiration, or suppose it to cease, and then no religious acts or affections can give forth anything that is godly or divine. For the creature can offer, or return nothing to God, but that which it has first received from him; therefore, if it is to offer and send up to God affections and aspirations that are divine and godly, it must of all necessity have the divine and godly nature living and breathing in it. Can anything reflect light, before it has received it? Or any other light, than that which it has received? Can any creature breathe forth earthly, or diabolical affections, before it is possessed of an earthly, or diabolical nature? Yet this is as possible, as for any creature to have divine affections rising up and dwelling in it, either before, or any further, than as it has or partakes of the divine nature dwelling and operating in it.

A religious faith that is uninspired, a hope, or love that proceeds not from the immediate working of the divine nature within us, can no more do any divine good to our souls, or unite them with the goodness of God, than an hunger after earthly food can feed us with the immortal bread of heaven.

All that the natural or uninspired man does, or can do in the church, has no more of the truth or power of divine worship in it, than that which he does in the field, or shop, through a desire of riches. And the reason is, because all the acts of the natural man, whether relating to matters of religion or the world, must be equally selfish, and there is no possibility of their being otherwise. For self-love, self-esteem, self-seeking, and living wholly to self, are as strictly the whole of all that is or possibly can be in the natural man, as in the natural beast; the one can no more be better, or act above this nature, than the other. Neither can any creature be in a better, or higher state than this, till something supernatural is found in it; and this supernatural something, called in scripture the WORD, or SPIRIT, or INSPIRATION of God, is that alone from which man can have the first good thought about God, or the least power of having more heavenly desires in his spirit, than he has in his flesh.

A religion that is not wholly built upon this supernatural ground, but solely stands upon the powers, reasonings, and conclusions of the natural uninspired man, has not so much as the shadow of true religion in it, but is a mere nothing, in the same sense, as an idol is said to be nothing, because the idol has nothing of that in it which is pretended by it. For the work of religion has no divine good in it, but as it brings forth, and keeps up essential union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God; which essential union cannot be made, but through love on both sides, nor by love, but where the love that works on both sides is of the same nature.

No man therefore can reach God with his love, or have union with him by it, but he who is inspired with that one same Spirit of love, with which God loved himself from all eternity, and before there was any creature. Infinite hosts of new created heavenly beings can begin no new kind of love of God, nor have the least power of beginning to love him at all, but so far as his own Holy Spirit of love, wherewith he hath from all eternity loved himself, is brought to life in them. This love, that was then in God alone, can be the only love in creatures that can draw them to God; they can have no power of cleaving to him, of willing that which he wills, or adoring the divine nature, but by partaking of that eternal Spirit of love; and therefore the continual immediate inspiration or operation of the Holy Spirit, is the one only possible ground of our continually loving God. And of this inspired love, and no other, it is that St. John says, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." Suppose it to be any other love, brought forth by any other thing but the Spirit of God breathing his own love in us, and then it cannot be true, that he who dwells in such love, dwells in God.

Divine inspiration was essential to man's first created state. The Spirit of the triune God, breathed into, or brought to life in him, was that alone which made him a holy creature in the image and likeness of God. To have no other mover, to live under no other guide or leader, but the Spirit, was that which constituted all the holiness which the first man could have from God. Had he not been thus at the first, God in him and he in God, brought into the world as a true offspring and real birth of the Holy Spirit, no dispensation of God to fallen man would have directed him to the Holy Spirit, or ever have made mention of his inspiration in man. For fallen man could be directed to nothing as his good, but that which he had, and was his good, before he fell. And had not the Holy Spirit been his first life, in and by which he lived, no inspired prophets among the sons of fallen Adam had ever been heard of, or any holy men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. For the thing would have been impossible, no fallen man could have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, but because the first life of man was a true and real birth of it; and also because every fallen man had, by the mercy and free grace of God, a secret remains of his first life preserved in him, though hidden, or rather swallowed up by flesh and blood; which secret remains, signified and assured to Adam by the name of a "bruiser of the serpent," or "seed of the woman," was his only capacity to be called and quickened again into his first life, by new breathings of the Holy Spirit in him.

Hence it plainly appears that the gospel state could not be God's last dispensation, or the finishing of man's redemption, unless its whole work was a work of the Spirit of God in the spirit of man; that is, unless without all veils, types, and shadows, it brought the thing itself, or the substance of all former types and shadows, into real enjoyment, so as to be possessed by man in spirit, and in truth. Now the thing itself, and for the sake of which all God's dispensations have been, is that first life of God which was essentially born in the soul of the first man, Adam, and to which he died.

But now, if the gospel dispensation comes at the end of all types and shadows, to bring forth again in man a true and full birth of that Holy Spirit which he had at first, then it must be plain, that the work of this dispensation must be solely and immediately the work of the Holy Spirit.

For if man could no other possible way have had a holy nature and spirit at first, but as an offspring or birth of the Holy Spirit at his creation, it is certain from the nature of the thing, that fallen man, dead to his first holy nature, can have that same holy nature again no other way, but solely by the operation of that same Holy Spirit, from the breath of which he had at first a holy nature and life

in God. Therefore immediate inspiration is as necessary to make fallen man alive again unto God, as it was to make man at first a living soul after the image and in the likeness of God. And continual inspiration is as necessary, as man's continuance in his redeemed state. For this is a certain truth, that that alone which begins, or gives life, must of all necessity be the only continuance or preservation of life. The second step can only be taken by that which gave power to take the first.

No life can continue in the goodness of its first created, or redeemed state, but by its continuing under the influence of, and working with and by that powerful root, or Spirit, which at first created, or redeemed it. Every branch of the tree, though ever so richly brought forth, must wither and die, as soon as it ceases to have continual union with, and virtue from that root, which first brought it forth. And to this truth, as absolutely grounded in the nature of the thing, our Lord appeals as a proof and full illustration of the necessity of his immediate indwelling, breathing, and operating in the redeemed soul of man, saying, "I am the vine, ye are the branches, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abides not in me, he is cast forth as a withered branch; for without me, ye can do nothing," John 15.

Now from these words let this conclusion be here drawn, viz., that therefore to turn to Christ as a light within us, to expect life from nothing but his holy birth raised within us, to give ourselves up wholly and solely to the immediate continual influx and operation of this Holy Spirit, depending wholly upon it for every kind and degree of goodness and holiness that we want, or can receive, is and can be nothing else, but proud, rank enthusiasm.

Now as infinitely absurd as this conclusion is, no one that condemns continual immediate inspiration as gross enthusiasm, can possibly do it with less absurdity, or show himself a wiser man, or better reasoner, than he that concludes, that because without Christ we can do nothing, therefore we ought not to believe, expect, wait for, and depend upon his continual immediate operation in everything that we do, or would do well. As to the pride charged upon this pretended enthusiasm, it is the same absurdity.

Christ says, “without me ye can do nothing,” the same as if he had said, As to yourselves, and all that can be called your own, you are mere helpless sin and misery, and nothing that is good, can come from you, but as it is done by the continual immediate breathing and inspiration of another Spirit, given by God to over-rule your own, to save and deliver you from all your own goodness your own wisdom, and learning which always were, and always will be, as corrupt and impure, as earthly and sensual, as your own flesh and blood. Now is there any selfish creaturely pride, in fully believing this to be true, and in acting in full conformity to it? If so, then he that confesses he neither has, nor ever can have a single farthing, but as it is freely given him from charity, thereby declares himself to be a purse-proud vain boaster of his own wealth. Such is the spiritual pride of him, who fully acknowledges that he neither has, nor can have the least spark or breathing after goodness, but what is freely kindled, or breathed into him by the Spirit of God. Again, if it is spiritual pride to believe, that nothing that we ever think, or say, or do, either in the church, or our closets, can have any truth of (sic) goodness in it but which is wrought solely and immediately by the Spirit of God in us, then it must be said, that in order to have religious humility we must never forget to take some share of our religious virtues to ourselves, and not allow (as Christ hath said) that without him we can do nothing that is good. It must also be said, that St. Paul took too much upon him when he said, “the life that I now live, is not mine, but Christ’s that liveth in me.”

Behold a pride, and a humility, the one as good as the other, and both logically descended from a wisdom, that confesses it comes not from above.

The necessity of a continual inspiration of the Spirit of God, both to begin the first, and continue every step of a divine life in man, is a truth to which every life in nature, as well as all scripture, bears full witness. A natural life, a bestial life, a diabolical life, can subsist no longer, than whilst they are immediately and continually under the working power of that root or source, from which they sprung. Thus it is with the divine life in man, it can never be in him, but as a growth of life in and from God. Hence it is, that resisting the Spirit, quenching the Spirit, grieving the Spirit, is that alone which gives birth and growth to every evil that reigns in the world, and leaves men, and churches, not only an easy, but a necessary prey to the devil, the world, and the flesh. And nothing but obedience to the Spirit, trusting to the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, praying with and for its continual inspiration, can possibly keep either men, or churches, from being sinners, or idolators, in all that they do. For everything in the life, or religion of man, that has not the Spirit of God for its mover,

director, and end, be it what it will, is but earthly, sensual, or devilish. The truth and perfection of the gospel state could not show itself, till it became solely a ministration of the Spirit, or a kingdom in which the Holy Spirit of God had the doing of all that was done in it. The apostles, whilst Christ was with them in the flesh, were instructed in heavenly truths from his mouth, and enabled to work miracles in his Name, yet not qualified to know and teach the mysteries of his kingdom. After his resurrection, he conversed with them forty days, speaking to them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God; nay though he breathed on them, and said, "receive ye the Holy Ghost," etc., yet this also would not do, they were still unable to preach, or bear witness to the truth, as it is in Jesus. And the reason is, there was still a higher dispensation to come, which stood in such an opening of the divine life in their hearts, as could not be effected from an outward instruction of Christ himself. For though he had sufficiently told his disciples the necessity of being born again of the Spirit, yet he left them unborn of it, till he came again in the power of the Spirit. He breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," yet that which was said and done was not the thing itself, but only a type or outward signification of what they should receive, when he, being glorified, should come again in the fullness and power of the Spirit, breaking open the deadness and darkness of their hearts with light and life from heaven, which light did, and alone could, open and verify in their souls, all that he had said and promised to them whilst he was with them in the flesh. All this is expressly declared by Christ himself, saying unto them, "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away"; therefore Christ taught them to believe the want, and joyfully to expect the coming of a higher and more blessed state, than that of his bodily presence with them. For he adds, "if I go not away, the comforter will not come"; therefore the comfort and blessing of Christ to his followers could not be had, till something more was done to them, and they were brought into a higher state than they could be by his verbal instruction of them. "But if I go away," says he, "I will send him unto you, and when the comforter, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; he shall glorify me" (that is, shall set up my kingdom in its glory, in the power of the Spirit) "for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you: I said of mine, because all things that the Father hath are mine," John 16.

Now when Christ had told them of the necessity of an higher state than that they were in, and the necessity of such a comforting illuminating guide, as they could not have till his outward teaching in human language was changed into the inspiration, and operation of his Spirit in their souls, he commands them, not to begin to bear witness of him to the world, from what they did and could in an human way know of him, his birth his life, doctrines, death, sufferings, resurrection, etc., but to tarry

at Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high; saying unto them, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And then shall ye bear witness unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the utmost part of the earth."

Here are two most important and fundamental truths fully demonstrated, First, that the truth and perfection of the gospel state could not take place, till Christ was glorified, and his kingdom among men made wholly and solely a continual immediate ministration of the Spirit: everything before this was but subservient for a time, and preparatory to this last dispensation, which could not have been the last, had it not carried man above types, figures and shadows, into the real possession and enjoyment of that which is the spirit and truth of a divine life. For the end is not come till it has found the beginning; that is, the last dispensation of God to fallen man cannot be come, till putting an end to the "bondage of weak and beggarly elements," Galatians 4:9, it brings man to that dwelling in God, and God in him, which he had at the beginning.

Secondly, that as the apostles could not, so no man, from their time to the end of the world, can have any true and real knowledge of the spiritual blessings of Christ's redemption, or have a divine call, capacity, or fitness to preach, and bear witness of them to the world, but solely by that same divine Spirit opening all the mysteries of a redeeming Christ in their inward parts, as it did in the apostles, evangelists, and first ministers of the gospel.

For why could not the apostles, who had been eye witnesses to all the whole process of Christ, why could they not with their human apprehension declare and testify the truth of such things, till they "were baptized with fire, and born again of the Spirit"? It is because the truth of such things, or the mysteries of Christ's process, as knowable by man, are nothing else in themselves, but those very things which are done by this heavenly fire and Spirit of God in our souls. Therefore to know the mysteries of Christ's redemption, and to know the redeeming work of God in our own souls, is the same thing; the one cannot be before, or without the other. Therefore every man, be he who he will, however able in all kinds of human literature, must be an entire stranger to all the mysteries of gospel redemption, and can only talk about them as of any other tale he has been told, till they are brought forth, verified, fulfilled, and witnessed to by that, which is found, felt and enjoyed of the whole process of Christ in his soul. For as redemption is in its whole nature an inward spiritual work, that works only in the altering, changing, and regenerating the life of the soul, so it must be

true, that nothing but the inward state of the soul can bear true witness to the redeeming power of Christ. For as it wholly consists in altering that which is the most radical in the soul, bringing forth a new spiritual death, and a new spiritual life, it must be true, that no one can know or believe the mysteries of Christ's redeeming power, by historically knowing, or rationally consenting to that which is said of him and them in written or spoken words, but only and solely by an inward experimental finding, and feeling the operation of them, in that new death, and new life, both of which must be effected in the soul of man, or Christ is not, cannot be found, and known by the soul as its salvation. It must also be equally true, that the redeemed state of the soul, being in itself nothing else but the resurrection of a divine and holy life in it, must as necessarily from first to last be the sole work of the breathing creating Spirit of God, as the first holy created state of the soul was. And all this, because the mysteries of Christ's redeeming power, which work and bring forth the renewed state of the soul, are not creaturely, finite, outward things, that may be found and enjoyed by verbal descriptions, or formed ideas of them, but are a birth and life, and spiritual operation, which as solely belongs to God alone, as his creating power. For nothing can redeem, but that same power which created the soul. Nothing can bring forth a good thought in it, but that which brought forth the power of thinking. And of every tendency towards goodness, be it ever so small, that same may be truly affirmed of it, which St. Paul affirmed of his highest state, "yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me."

But if the belief of the necessity and certainty of immediate continual divine inspiration, in and for everything that can be holy and good in us, be (as its accusers say) rank enthusiasm, then he is the only sober orthodox Christian, who of many a good thought and action that proceeds from him, frankly says, in order to avoid enthusiasm, My own power, and not Christ's Spirit living and breathing in me, has done this for me. For if all that is good is not done by Christ, then something that is good is done by myself.

It is in vain to think, that there is a middle way, and that rational divines have found it out, as Dr. Warburton has done, who though denying immediate continual inspiration, yet allows that the Spirit's "ordinary influence occasionally assists the faithful." (Sermons, vol. i.)

Now this middle way has neither scripture nor sense in it; for an occasional influence or concurrence is as absurd, as an occasional God, and necessarily supposes such a God. For an occasional

influence of the Spirit upon us supposes an occasional absence of the Spirit from us. For there could be no such thing, unless God was sometimes with us, and sometimes not, sometimes doing us good, as the inward God of our life, and sometimes doing us no good at all, but leaving us to be good from ourselves. Occasional influence necessarily implies all this blasphemous absurdity. Again, this middle way of an occasional influence and assistance necessarily supposes, that there is something of man's own that is good, or the Holy Spirit of God neither would, nor could assist or cooperate with it.

But if there was anything good in man for God to assist and cooperate with, besides the SEED of his own divine nature, or his own WORD of life striving to bruise the serpent's nature within us, it could not be true, that there is only one that is good, and that is God And were there any goodness in creatures, either in heaven, or on earth, but the one goodness of the divine nature, living, working, manifesting itself in them, as its created instruments, then good creatures, both in heaven and on earth, would have something else to adore, besides, or along with God. For goodness, be it where it will, is adorable for itself, and because it is goodness; if therefore any degree of it belonged to the creature, it ought to have a share of that same adoration that is paid to the creator. Therefore, if to believe that nothing godly can be alive in us, but what has all its life from the Spirit of God living and breathing in us, if to look solely to it, and depend wholly upon it, both for the beginning, and growth of every thought and desire that can be holy and good in us, be proud rank enthusiasm, then it must be the same enthusiasm to own but one God. For he that owns more goodness than one, owns more gods than one. And he that believes he can have any good in him, but the one goodness of God, manifesting itself in him, and through him, owns more goodness than one.

But if it be true, that God and goodness cannot be divided, then it must be a truth for ever and ever, that so much of good, so much of God, must be in the creature.

And here lies the true unchangeable distinction between God, and nature, and the natural creature. Nature and creature are only for the outward manifestation of the inward invisible unapproachable powers of God; they can rise no higher, nor be anything else in themselves, but as temples, habitations, or instruments, in which the supernatural God can, and does manifest himself in various degrees, bringing forth creatures to be good with his own goodness, to love and adore him with his own Spirit of love, for ever singing praises to the divine nature by that which they

partake of it. This is the religion of divine inspiration, which being interpreted, is Immanuel or God within us. Everything short of this, is short of that religion which worships God in spirit and in truth. And every religious trust or confidence in anything, but the divine operation within us, is but a sort of image worship, which though it may deny the form, yet retains the power thereof in the heart. And he that places any religious safety in theological decisions, scholastic points, in particular doctrines and opinions, that must be held about the scripture words of "faith," "justification," "sanctification," "election," and "reprobation," so far departs from the true worship of the living God within him, and sets up an idol of notions to be worshipped, if not instead of, yet along with him. And I believe it may be taken for a certain truth, that every society of Christians, whose religion stands upon this ground, however ardent, laborious, and good their zeal may seem to be in such matters, yet in spite of all, sooner or later, it will be found that nature is at the bottom, and that a selfish, earthly, overbearing pride in their own definitions and doctrines of words, will by degrees creep up to the same height, and become that same fleshly wisdom, doing those very same things, which they exclaim against in popes, cardinals, and Jesuits. Nor can it possibly be otherwise. For a letter-learned zeal has but one nature wherever it is, it can only do that for Christians, which it did for Jews. As it anciently brought forth scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, and crucifiers of Christ, as it afterwards brought forth heresies, schisms, popes, papal decrees, images, anathemas, transubstantiations, so in Protestant countries it will be doing the same thing, only with other materials; images of wood and clay, will only be given up for images of doctrines; grace and works, imputed sin, and imputed righteousness, election and reprobation, will have their Synods of Dort, as truly evangelical, as any Council of Trent.

This must be the case of all fallen Christendom, as well popish as Protestant, till single men, and churches, know, confess, and firmly adhere to this one scripture truth, which the blessed Behmen prefixed as a motto to most of his epistles, viz., "That our salvation is in the life of Jesus Christ in us." And that, because this alone was the divine perfection of man before he fell, and will be his perfection when he is one with Christ in heaven.

Everything besides this, or that is not solely aiming at and essentially leading to it, is but mere Babel in all sects and divisions of Christians, living to themselves, and their own old man under a seeming holiness of Christian strife and contention about scripture works. But this truth of truths, fully possessed, and firmly adhered to, brings God and man together, puts an end to every Lo here, and

Lo there, and turns the whole faith of man to a Christ that can nowhere be a savior to him, but as essentially born in the inmost spirit of his soul, nor possible to be born there by any other means, but the immediate inspiration and working power of the Holy Spirit within him. To this man alone all scripture gives daily edification; the words of Christ and his apostles fall like a fire into him. And what is it that they kindle there? Not notions, not itching ears, nor rambling desires after new and new expounders of them, but a holy flame of love, to be always with, always attending to, that Christ and his Holy Spirit within him, which alone can make him to be and do all that, which the words of Christ and his apostles have taught. For there is no possibility of being like-minded with Christ in anything that he taught, or having the truth of one Christian virtue, but by the nature and Spirit of Christ become essentially living in us.

Read all our savior's divine sermon from the mount, consent to the goodness of every part of it, yet the time of practicing it will never come, till you have a new nature from Christ, and are as vitally in him, and he in you, as the vine in the branch, and the branch in the vine. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is a divine truth, but will do us no divine good, unless we receive it as saying neither more nor less, than "Blessed are they that are born again of the Spirit, for they alone can see God." For no blessedness, either of truth or life, can be found either in men or angels, but where the Spirit and life of God is essentially born within them. And all men or churches, not placing all in the life, light, and guidance of the Holy Spirit of Christ, but pretending to act in the name, and for the glory of God, from opinions which their logic and learning have collected from scripture words, or from what a Calvin, an Arminius, a Socinus, or some smaller name, has told them to be right or wrong, all such, are but where the apostles were, when "by the way there was a strife among them who should be the greatest." And how much soever they may say, and boast of their great zeal for truth, and the only glory of God, yet their own open notorious behavior towards one another, is proof enough, that the great strife amongst them is, which shall be the greatest sect, or have the largest number of followers. A strife, from the same root, and just as useful to Christianity, as that of the carnal apostles, who should be the greatest. For not numbers of men, or kingdoms professing Christianity, but numbers redeemed from the death of Adam to the life of Christ are the glory of the Christian church. And in whatever national Christianity anything else is meant or sought after, by the profession of the gospel, but a new heavenly life, through the mediatorial nature and Spirit of the eternal Son of God, born in the fallen soul, wherever this spirituality of the gospel-

redemption is denied or overlooked, there the spirit of self, of satanic and worldly subtlety, will be church and priest, and supreme power, in all that is called religion.

But to return now to the doctrine of continual inspiration. The natural or unregenerate man, educated in pagan learning, and scholastic theology, seeing the strength of his genius in the search after knowledge, how easily and learnedly he can talk, and write, criticize and determine upon all scripture words and facts, looks at all this as a full proof of his own religious wisdom, power and goodness, and calls immediate inspiration enthusiasm, not considering, that all the woes denounced by Christ against scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, are so many woes now at this day denounced against every appearance and show of religion, that the natural man can practice.

And what is well to be noted, everyone, however high in human literature, is but this very natural man, and can only have the goodness of a carnal secular religion, till as empty of all, as a new born child, the Spirit of God gets a full birth in him, and becomes the inspirer and doer of all that he wills, does, and aims at, in his whole course of religion.

Our divine master compares the religion of the learned Pharisees "to whited sepulchers, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of rottenness, stench, and dead men's bones."

Now whence was it, that a religion, so serious in its restraints, so beautiful in its outward form and practices, and commanding such reverence from all that beheld it, was yet charged by truth itself with having inwardly such an abominable nature? It was only for this one reason, because it was a religion of self. Therefore, from the beginning to the end of the world, it must be true, that where self is kept alive, has power, and keeps up its own interests, whether in speaking, writing, teaching or defending the most specious number of scripture doctrines and religious forms, there is that very old Pharisee still alive, whom Christ with so much severity of language constantly condemned. And the reason of such heavy condemnation is, because self is the only root, or rather the sum total of all sin; every sin that can be named is centered in it, and the creature can sin no higher, than he can live to self. For self is the fullness of atheism and idolatry, it is nothing else but the creature broken off from God and Christ; it is the power of Satan living and working in us, and the sad continuance of that first turning from God, which was the whole fall or death of our first Father.

And yet, sad and satanical as this self is, what is so much cherished and nourished with our daily love, fears, and cares about it? How much worldly wisdom, how much laborious learning, how many subtleties of contrivance, and how many flattering applications and submissions are made to the world, that this apostate self may have its fullness, both of inward joys, and outward glory?

But to all this it must yet be added, that a religion of self, of worldly glory and prosperity carried on under the gospel state, has more of a diabolical nature than that of the Jewish Pharisees. It is the highest and last working of the mystery of iniquity, because it lives to self, Satan, and the world, in and by a daily profession of denying and dying to self, of being crucified with Christ, of being led by his Spirit, of being risen from the world, and set with him in heavenly places.

Let then the writers against continual immediate divine inspiration take this for a certain truth, that by so doing, they do all they can to draw man from that which is the very truth and perfection of the gospel state, and are, and can be, no better than pitiable advocates for a religion of self, more blamable and abominable now, than that which was of old condemned by Christ. For whatever is pretended to be done in gospel religion, by any other spirit or power, but that of the Holy Ghost bringing it forth, whether it be praying, preaching, or practicing any duties, is all of it but the religion of self, and can be nothing else. For all that is born of the flesh, is flesh, and nothing is spiritual, but that which has its whole birth from the Spirit. But man, not ruled and governed by the Spirit, has only the nature of corrupt flesh, is under the full power and guidance of fallen nature, and is that very natural man, to whom the things of God are foolishness. But man boldly rejecting, and preaching against a continual immediate divine inspiration, is an anti-apostle, he lays another foundation, than that which Christ has laid, he teaches that Christ needs not, must not, be all in all in us, and is a preacher up of the folly of fearing to grieve, quench, and resist the Holy Spirit. For when, or where, or how could everyone of us be in danger of grieving, quenching, or resisting the Spirit, unless his holy breathings and inspirations were always within us? Or how could the sin against the Holy Ghost have a more dreadful nature, than that against the Father and the Son, but because the continual immediate guidance and operation of the Spirit, is the last and highest manifestation of the Holy Trinity in the fallen soul of man? It is not because the Holy Ghost is more worthy, or higher in nature than the Father and the Son, but because Father and Son come forth in their own highest power of redeeming love, through the covenant of a continual immediate inspiration of the Spirit, to be always dwelling and working in the soul. Many weak things have been conjectured, and published to the

world, about the sin against the Holy Ghost; whereas the whole nature of it lies in this, that it is a sinning, or standing out against the last and highest dispensation of God for the full redemption of man. Christ says, "If I had not come, they had not had sin," that is, they had not had such a weight of guilt upon them; therefore the sinning against Christ come into the flesh, was of a more unpardonable nature, than sinning against the Father under the Law. So likewise sinning against the Holy Ghost is of a more unpardonable nature than sinning against the Father under the Law, or against the Son as come in the flesh, because these two preceding dispensations were but preparatory to the coming, or full ministration of the Spirit. But when Father and Son were come in the power and manifestation of the Spirit, then he that refuses or resists this ministration of the Spirit, resists all that the Holy Trinity can do to restore and revive the first life of God in the soul, and so commits the unpardonable sin, and which is therefore unpardonable, because there remains no further, or higher power to remove it out of the soul For no sin is pardonable, because of its own nature: or that which is in itself, but because there is something yet to come that can remove it out of the soul; nor can any sin be unpardonable, but because it has withstood, or turned from that which was the last and highest remedy for the removal of it.

Hence it is, that grieving, quenching, or resisting the Spirit, is the sin of all sins, that most of all stops the work of redemption, and in the highest degree separates man from all union with God. But there could be no such sin, but because the Holy Spirit is always breathing, willing, and working within us. For what spirit can be grieved by us, but that which has its will within us disobeyed? What spirit can be quenched by us, but that which is, and ever would be, a holy fire of life within us? What spirit can be resisted by us, but that which is, and has its working within us? A spirit on the outside of us cannot be the Spirit of God, nor could such a spirit be any more quenched, or hindered by our spirit, than a man by indignation at a storm could stop its rage. Now, dreadful as the above-mentioned sin is, I would ask all the writers against continual immediate divine inspiration, how they could more effectually lead men into an habitual state of sinning against the Holy Ghost, than by such doctrine? For how can we possibly avoid the sin of grieving, quenching, etc., the Spirit, but by continually reverencing his holy presence within us, by continually waiting for, trusting, and solely attending to that which the Spirit of God wills, works, and manifests within us? To turn men from this continual dependence upon the Holy Spirit, is turning them from all true knowledge of God. For without this, there is no possibility of any edifying, saving knowledge of God. For though we have ever so many mathematical demonstrations of his being, etc., we are without all real knowledge of him, till his own

quickening Spirit within us manifests him, as a power of life, light, love, and goodness, essentially found, vitally felt, and adored in our souls. This is the one knowledge of God, which is eternal life, because it is the life of God manifested in the soul, that knowledge of which Christ says, No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son revealeth him. Therefore this knowledge is only possible to be found in him, who is in Christ a new creature, for so it is that Christ revealeth the Father. But if none belong to God, but those who are led by the Spirit of God, if we are reprobates unless the Spirit of Christ be living in us, who need be told, that all that we have to trust to or depend upon, as children of God and Christ, is the continual immediate guidance, unction, and teaching of this Holy Spirit within us? Or how can we more profanely sin against this Spirit and power of God within us, or more expressly call men from the power of God to Satan, than by ridiculing a faith and hope that look wholly and solely to his continual immediate breathings and operations, for all that can be holy and good in us? "When I am lifted up from the earth," says Christ, "I will draw all men to me." Therefore the one great power of Christ in and over the souls of men is after he is in heaven; then begins the true full power of his drawing, because it is by his Spirit in man that he draws. But who can more resist this drawing, or defeat its operation in us, than he that preaches against, and condemns the belief of a continual and immediate inspiration of the Spirit, when Christ's drawing can be in nothing else, nor be powerful any other way?

Now that which we are here taught, is the whole end of all scripture; for all that is there said, however learnedly read, or studied by Hebrew or Greek skill, fails of its only end, till it leads and brings us to an essential God within us, to feel and find all that which the scriptures speak of God, of man, of life and death, of good and evil, of heaven and hell, as essentially verified in our own souls. For all is within man that can be either good or evil to him: God within him, is his divine life, his divine light, and his divine love: Satan within him is his life of self, of earthly wisdom, of diabolical falseness, wrath, pride, and vanity of every kind. There is no middle way between these two. He that is not under the power of the one, is under the power of the other. And the reason is, man was created in and under the power of the divine life; so far therefore as he loses, or turns from this life of God, so far he falls under the power of self, of Satan, and worldly wisdom. When St. Peter, full of an human good love towards Christ, advised him to avoid his sufferings, Christ rejected him with a "Get thee behind me, Satan," and only gave this reason for it, "for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." A plain proof, that whatever is not of and from the Holy Spirit of God in us, however plausible it may outwardly seem to men, to their wisdom, and human

goodness, is yet in itself nothing else but the power of Satan within us. And as St. Paul said truly of himself, “By the grace of God I am what I am”; so every wise (sic), every scribe, every disputer of this world, every truster to the strength of his own rational learning, everyone that is under the power of his own fallen nature, never free from desires of honors and preferments, ever thirsting to be rewarded for his theological abilities, ever fearing to be abased and despised, always thankful to those who flatter him with his distinguished merit, everyone that is such, be he who he will, may as truly say of himself, Through my turning and trusting to something else than the grace and inspiration of God’s Spirit, I am what I am. For nothing else hinders any professor of Christ from being able truly to say with St. Paul, “God forbid that I should glory in anything but the cross of Christ, by which I am crucified to the world, and the world to me.” Nothing makes him incapable of finding that which St. Paul found, when he said, “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me”; nothing hinders all this, but his disregard of a Christ within him, his choosing to have a religion of self, of laborious learning, and worldly greatness, rather than be such a gospel fool for Christ, as to renounce all that which he renounced, and to seek no more earthly honor and praise than he did, and to will nothing, know nothing, seek nothing, but that which the Spirit of God and Christ knows, wills, and seeks in him. Here, and here alone, lies the Christian’s full and certain power of overcoming self, the devil, and the world. But Christians, seeking and turning to anything else, but to be led and inspired by the one Spirit of God and Christ, will bring forth a Christendom that in the sight of God will have no other name, than a spiritual Babylon, a spiritual Egypt, and Sodom, a scarlet whore, a devouring beast, and red dragon. For all these names belong to all men, however learned, and to all churches, whether greater or less, in which the spirit of this world has any share of power. This was the fall of the whole church soon after the apostolic ages; and all human reformations, begun by ecclesiastical learning, and supported by civil power, will signify little or nothing, nay often make things worse, till all churches, dying to all own will, all own wisdom, all own advancement, seek for no reforming power but from that Spirit of God which converted sinners, publicans, harlots, Jews, and heathens, into an holy apostolical church at the first, a church which knew they were of God, that they belonged to God, by that Spirit which he had given them, and which worked in them. “Ye are not in the flesh,” says the apostle, “but in the Spirit”; but then he adds, as the only ground of this, “if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you”; surely he means, if so be ye are moved, guided, and governed by that, which the Spirit wills, works and inspires within you. And then to show the absolute necessity of this life of God in the soul, he adds, “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” And that this is the state to which God has appointed, and called

all Christians, he thus declares, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Galatians 4:6. The same thing, most surely, as if he had said, Nothing in you can cry, or pray to God as its Father, but the Spirit of his Son Christ come to life in you. Which is also as true of every tendency in the soul towards God or goodness; so much as there is of it, so much there is of the seed of the woman striving to bring forth a full birth of Christ in the soul. "Lo, I am always with you," says the holy Jesus, "even to the end of the world." How is he with us? Not outwardly, every illiterate man knows; not inwardly, says many a learned doctor, because a Christ within us is as gross enthusiasm, or Quakerism, as the light within us. How then shall the faith of the common Christian find any comfort in these words of Christ's promise, unless the spirit brings him into a remembrance and belief, that Christ is in him, and with him, as the vine is with and in the branch. Christ says, "Without me ye can do nothing"; and also, "If any man loves me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Now if without him we can do nothing, then all the love that a man can possibly have for Christ, must be from the power and life of Christ in him, and from such a love, so begotten, man has the Father and the Son dwelling and making their abode in him. What higher proof, or fuller certainty can there be, that the whole work of redemption in the soul of man is and can be nothing else, but the inward, continual, immediate operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, raising up again their own first life in the soul, to which our first father died?

Again, Christ, after his glorification in heaven, says, "Behold I STAND at the DOOR and KNOCK." He does not say, Behold ye have me in the scriptures. Now what is the DOOR at which Christ, at the right-hand of God in heaven, KNOCKS? Surely it is the heart, to which Christ is always present. He goes on, IF ANY MAN HEARS MY VOICE; how hears, but by the hearing of the heart, or what voice, but that which is the speaking or sounding of Christ within him; he adds, AND OPENS THE DOOR, that is, will be a living holy nature, and spirit born within him, AND SUP WITH HIM, and HE WITH ME. Behold the last finishing work of a redeeming Jesus, entered into the heart that opens to him, bringing forth the joy, the blessing, and perfection of that first life of God in the soul, which was lost by the fall, set forth as a supper, or feast of the heavenly Jesus with the soul, and the soul with him. Can anyone justly call it enthusiasm to say, that this supping of the soul with this glorified Christ within it, must mean something more heavenly transacted in the soul than that last supper which he celebrated with his disciples, whilst he was with them in flesh. For that supper of bread and wine was such, as a Judas could partake of, and could only be an outward type or signification of that inward

and blessed nourishment, with which the believing soul should be feasted, when the glorified Son of God should as a creating Spirit enter into us, quickening, and raising up his own heavenly nature and life within us. Now this continual knocking of Christ at the door of the heart, sets forth the case or nature of a continual immediate divine inspiration within us; it is always with us, but there must be an opening of the heart to it; and though it is always there, yet it is only felt and found by those, who are attentive to it, depend upon, and humbly wait for it. Now let anyone tell me how he can believe anything of this voice of Christ, how he can listen to it, hear, or obey it, but by such a faith, as keeps him habitually turned to an immediate constant inspiration of the Spirit of Christ within him? Or how any heathenish profane person, can do more despite to this presence and power of Christ in his own soul, or more effectually lead others into it, than that ecclesiastic, who makes a mock at the light within, a Christ within and openly blasphemes that faith, and hope, and trust, which solely relies upon being moved by the Spirit, as its only power of doing that which is right, and good, and pious, either towards God or man. Let every man, whom this concerns, lay it to heart. Time, and the things of time, will soon have an end; and he that in time trusts to anything but the Spirit and power of God working in his heart, will be ill fitted to enter into eternity; God must be all in all in us here, or we cannot be his hereafter. Time works only for eternity; and poverty eternal must as certainly follow him, who dies only fully stuffed with human learning, as he who dies only full of worldly riches. The folly of thinking to have any divine learning, but that which the Holy Spirit teaches, or to make ourselves rich in knowledge towards God, by heaps of common place learning crowded into our minds, will leave us as dreadfully cheated, as that rich builder of barns in the gospel, to whom it was said, “Thou fool, this night, shall thy soul be required of thee. And then, whose shall all these things be?” Luke 12. So is every man that treasures up a religious learning that comes not wholly from the Spirit of God. But to return. To this inward continual attention to the continual working of the Holy Spirit within us, the apostle calls us in these words, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not, who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn from him, that speaketh from heaven,” Hebrews 12:25. Now what is this speaking from heaven, which it is so dangerous to refuse, or resist?

Surely not outward voices from heaven. Or what could the apostle’s advice signify to us, unless it be such a speaking from heaven, as we may and must be always either obeying or refusing? St. James saith, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” What devil? Surely not an outward creature or spirit, that tempts us by an outward power. Or what resistance can we make to the devil, but that of

inwardly falling away, or turning from the workings of his evil nature and spirit within us? They therefore who call us from waiting for, depending upon, and attending to the continual secret inspirations and breathings of the Holy Spirit within us, call us to RESIST God in the same manner as the apostle exhorts us to resist the devil. For God being only a spiritual good, and the devil our spiritual evil, neither the one nor the other can be resisted, or not resisted by us, but so far as their spiritual operations within us are either turned from, or obeyed by us. St. James having shown us, that resisting the devil is the only way to make him flee from us, that is, to lose his power in us, immediately adds, how we are to behave towards God, that he may not flee from us, or his holy work be stopped in us. "Draw near," says he, "to God, and God will draw near to you." What is this drawing near? Surely not by any local motion, either in God or us. But the same is meant, as if he had said, Resist not God, that is, let his holy will within you have its full work; keep wholly, obediently attentive to that, which he is and has, and does within you, and then God will draw near to you, that is, will more and more manifest the power of his holy presence in you, and make you more and more partakers of the divine nature. Further, what a blindness is it in the forementioned writers, to charge private persons with the enthusiasm of holding the necessity, and certainty of continual immediate inspiration, and to attack them as enemies to the established church, when everybody's eyes see, that collect after collect, in the established liturgy, teaches and requires them to believe, and pray for the continual inspiration of the Spirit, as that alone, by which they can have the least good thought, or desire? Thus, "O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts." Is it possible for words more strongly to express the necessity of a continual divine inspiration? Or can inspiration be higher, or more immediate in prophets and apostles, than that which directs, that which rules our hearts, not now and then, but in all things? Or can the absolute necessity of this be more fully declared, than by saying, that if it is not in this degree both of height and continuance in and over our hearts, nothing that is done by us can be pleasing to God, that is, can have any union with him?

Now the matter is not at all about the different effects or works proceeding from inspiration, as whether by it a man be made a saint in himself, or sent by God with a prophetic message to others, this affects not the nature and necessity of inspiration, which is just as great, just as necessary in itself to all true goodness, as to all true prophecy. All scripture is of divine inspiration. But why so? "Because holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Now the above collect as

well as Christ and his apostles oblige us in like manner to hold, that all holiness is by divine inspiration, and that therefore there could have been no holy men of old, or in any latter times, but solely for this reason, because "They LIVED as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Again, the liturgy prays thus, "O God, from whom all good things do come, grant that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same." Now, if in any of my writings I have ever said anything higher, or further of the nature and necessity of continual divine inspiration, than this church-prayer does, I refuse no censure that shall be passed upon me. But if I have, from all that we know of God, of nature, and creature, shown the utter impossibility of any kind, or degree of goodness to be in us, but from the divine nature living and breathing in us, if I have shown that all scripture, Christ and his apostles, over and over say the same thing; that our church liturgy is daily praying according to it; what kinder thing can I say of those churchmen who accuse me of enthusiasm, than that which Christ said of his blind crucifiers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It is to no purpose to object to all this, that these kingdoms are over-run with enthusiasts of all kinds, and that Moravians with their several divisions, and Methodists of various kinds, are everywhere acting in the wildest manner, under the pretense of being called and led by the Spirit. Be it so, or not so, is a matter I meddle not with; nor is the doctrine I am upon in the least affected by it. For what an argument would this be; enthusiasts of the present and former ages have made a bad use of the doctrine of being led by the Spirit of God, ergo, "He is enthusiastic, or helps forward enthusiasm, who preaches up the doctrine of being led by the Spirit of God." Now absurd as this is, was any of my accusers as high in genius, as bulky in learning, as colossus was in stature, he would be at a loss to bring a stronger argument than this, to prove me an enthusiast, or an abettor of them.

But as I do not begin to doubt about the necessity, the truth, and perfection of gospel religion, when told that whole nations and churches have, under a pretense of regard to it, and for the sake of it, done all the bad things that can be charged upon this or that leading enthusiast, whether you call those bad things, schism, perjury, rebellion, worldly craft, and hypocrisy, etc. So I give not up the necessity, the truth, and perfection of looking wholly to the Spirit of God and Christ within me, as my promised inspirer, and only worker of all that can be good in me, I give not this up, because in this, or that age, both spiritual pride and fleshly lusts have prospered by it, or because Satan has

often led people into all the heights of self-glory, and self-seeking under a pretense of being inspired with gospel humility, and gospel self-denial.

Another charge upon me, equally false, and I may say, more senseless, is that I am a declared enemy to the use of reason in religion. And why?

Because in all my writings, I teach that reason is to be denied, etc. I own, I have not only taught this, but have again and again proved the absolute necessity of it. And this, because Christ has made it absolutely necessary, by saying, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself," etc. For how can a man deny himself, without denying his reason, unless reason be no part of himself? Or how can a rational creature whose chief distinction from brutes is that of his reason, be called to deny himself any other way, than by denying that which is peculiar to himself? Let the matter be thus expressed, man is not to deny his reason. Well, how then? Why, (N.B.) he is only to deny himself. Can there be a greater folly of words? And yet it is their wisdom of words, who allow the denying of self to be good doctrine, but boggle, and cry out at the denying of reason, as quite bad. For how can a man deny himself, but by denying that which is the life, and spirit, and power of self? What makes a man a sinner? Nothing but the power and working of his natural reason. And therefore, if our natural reason is not to be denied, we must keep up and follow that which works every sin that ever was, or can be in us. For we can sin nowhere, or in anything, but where our natural reason or understanding has its power in us. What is meant in all scripture by the flesh and its works? Is it something distinct, and different from the workings of our rational and intelligent nature? No, it is our whole intelligent, rational nature, that constitutes the flesh or the carnal man, who could not be criminally so, any more than the beasts, but because his carnality has all its evil from his intelligent nature or reason, being the life and power of it. And everything which our Lord says of self, is so much said of our natural reason; and all that the scripture says of the flesh and its evil nature, is so much said of the evil state of our natural reason, which therefore is, ought, and must be denied, in the same manner and degree as self and flesh is, and must be denied.

I have elsewhere shown the gross darkness and ignorance which govern that which is called metaphysics in the schools, "that it is so great, that if you were to say, that God first creates a soul out of nothing, and when that is done, then takes an understanding faculty and puts it into it, after that, adds a will, and then a memory, all as independently made, as when a tailor first makes

the body of a coat, and then adds sleeves, and pockets to it were you to say this, the schools of Descartes, Malebranche, or Locke, could have nothing to say against it." (Spirit of Love, First Part.)

And here truth obliges me to say, that scholastic divinity is in as great ignorance about the most fundamental truths of the gospel, as I have again and again shown, in regard to the nature of the fall of man, and all the scripture expressions concerning the new birth; and here also concerning the doctrine, of a man's denying himself, which modern learning supposes to be possible without, or different from a man's denying his own natural reason; which is an absurdity of the greatest magnitude. For what is self, but that which a man is, and has in his natural capacity? Or what is the fullness of his natural capacity, but the strength and power of his reason?

How then can any man deny himself, but by denying that which gives self its whole nature, name, and power? If man was not a rational creature, he could not be called to deny himself, he could not need, or receive the benefit and goodness of self-denial: no man therefore can obey the precept of denying himself, or have any benefit or goodness from it, but so far as he denies, or dies to his own natural reason, because the self of man, and the natural reason of man, are strictly the same thing. Again, our blessed Lord said in his agony, "Not my will, but thine be done." And had not this been the form of his whole life, he had not lived without sin. Now thus to deny our own will, that God's will may be done in us, is the height of our calling; and so far as we keep from our own natural will, so far we keep from sin. But now, if our own natural will, as having all sin and evil in it, is always to be denied, whatever it costs us, I would fain know, how our natural reason can ever escape, or how we can deny our own will, and not deny that rational or intelligent power, in and from which the will has its whole existence and continual direction? Or how there can be always a badness of our own will, which is not the badness of our own natural intellectual power? Therefore it is a truth of the utmost certainty, that as much as we are obliged to deny our own natural will that the will of God may be done in us, so much are we obliged to deny our own natural reason and understanding that our own will may not be done, or followed by us. For whoever lives to his own natural reason, he necessarily lives to his own natural will. For our natural will, in whatever state it is, is nothing else but our natural reason willing this, or that.

Now hard as this may seem to unregenerate nature, and yet harder to nature highly exalted, and big with the glory of all that, which wits, poets, orators, critics, sophists, and historians have enriched it

with, yet true it is, and a truth as certain as the fall of man, that this full denial of our own natural will, and our own natural reason, is the only possible way for divine knowledge, divine light, and divine goodness, to have any place or power of birth in us. All other religious knowledge, got any other way, let it be as great as it will, is only great in vanity, emptiness, and delusion. For nothing but that which comes immediately from God, can have anything godly in it, and all that which comes from self, and natural reason, however outwardly colored, can have no better a nature within, that self-seeking, self-esteem, and fleshly wisdom, which (N.B.) are those very works of the devil in us, which Christ came into the world to destroy. For the efforts of natural reason, and self-abilities, to be great in religious knowledge from our own particular talents, are as satanical things as any we carry about us, and most of all fix us in the highest contrariety to that state, which our Lord affirms to be absolutely necessary. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now as sure as this is necessary, so sure is it, that no one can be thus converted, or come under the good influence of this childlike nature, till natural reason, self, and own will, are all equally denied. For all the evil and corruption of our fallen nature consists in this, it is an awakened life of own reason, own will broken off from God, and so fallen into the selfish workings of its own earthly nature.

Now whether this self broken off from God, reasons, wills, and contends about the difference of scripture words and opinions, or reasons against them all, the same evil state of fallen nature, the same loss of life, the same separation from God, the same evil tempers of flesh and blood, will be equally strengthened and inflamed by the one as by the other. Hence it is, that papists and Protestants are hating, fighting, and killing one another for the sake of their different excellent opinions, and yet, as to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, they are in the highest union and communion with one another. For if you expect a zealous Protestant to be therefore a new born creature alive unto God, or a zealous papist to be therefore dead to all divine goodness, you may be said to have lived in the world without either eyes or ears. And the reason why it must be so, is because bad syllogisms for transubstantiation, and better syllogisms against it, signify no more towards the casting Satan out of our souls, than a bad or better taste for painting.

Hence also it is, that Christendom, full of the nicest decisions about faith, grace, works, merits, satisfactions, heresies, schisms, etc., is full of all those evil tempers which prevailed in the heathen world, when none of these things were ever thought of.

A scholar, pitying the blindness and folly of those who live to themselves in the cares and pleasures of this vain life, thinks himself divinely employed, and to have escaped the pollutions of the world, because he is, day after day, dividing, dissecting, and mending church-opinions, fixing heresies here, schisms there; forgetting all the while, that a carnal self and natural reason have the doing of all that is done by this learned zeal, and are as busy and active in him, as in the reasoning infidel, or projecting worldling.

For where self is wholly denied, there nothing can be called heresy, schism, or wickedness, but the want of loving God with our whole heart, and our neighbor as ourselves; nor anything be called truth, life, or salvation, but the Spirit, nature, and power of Christ living and manifesting itself in us, as it did in him. But where self or the natural man is become great in religious learning, there the greater the scholar, the more firmly will he be fixed in their religion, whose God is their belly. I write not to reason, says the blessed Jacob Behmen; O enthusiasm! says the mouth of learning: and yet Jacob said as sober a truth, as if he had said, I write not to self and own will; for natural reason, self and own will, always did, and always must see through the same eyes, and hear through the same ears. Now let it only be supposed, that Behmen and myself, when we speak of natural reason, mean only the natural man (as is over and over declared by us) and then Behmen's saying, that he writes neither from reason, nor to the natural reason of others, is only saying that very same thing as St. Paul says, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, (N.B.) neither can he know them, (N.B.) because they are spiritually discerned."

But that I may fully show the perverseness of my accusers, in charging me with denying the use of reason in religion, see here a word or two of what I have said at large, and in the plainest words, more than twenty-four years ago, which doctrine I have maintained in all that I have since wrote. My words are these. "You shall see reason possessed of all that belongs to it. I will grant it to have as great a share in the good things of religion, as in the good things of this life; that it can assist the soul, just as it can assist the body, that it has the same power and virtue in the spiritual, that it has in the natural world; that it can communicate to us as much of the one, as of the other, and is of the same use and importance in the one as in the other. Can you ask more?" All which I thus make out in the following manner. "Man, considered as a member of this world, who is to have his share of the good that is in it, is a sensible, and a rational creature, that is, he has a certain number of senses, as seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling, by which he is sensible of that which the outward

world, in which he is placed, can do for him, or communicate to him, and so is sensible of what kind and degree of happiness he can have from it. “Now besides these organs of sense, he has a power or faculty of reasoning upon the ideas, which he has received from these senses. “Now how is it, that the good things of this world are communicated to man? How is he put in possession of them? To what part of him are they proposed? Are his senses, or his reason, the means of his having so much as he has or can have from this world? “Now here, you must degrade reason just as much as it is degraded by religion, and are obliged to set it as low with respect to the things of this world, as it is set with respect to the things of the spiritual world. It is no more the means of communicating the good things of the one, than of the other. And as St. Paul says, “The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God,” for this reason, because they are spiritually discerned; so you must of necessity say, the rational man cannot receive the things of this world, for this reason, because they are sensibly received, that is, by the organs of sense. Reason therefore has no higher office or power in the things of this world, than in the things of religion; and religion does no more violence to your reason, or rejects it any other way, than all the good things of this world reject it; it is not seeing, it is not hearing, tasting, or feeling the things of this life; it can supply the place of no one of these senses. “Now it is only thus helpless and useless in religion; it is neither seeing, nor hearing, tasting, nor feeling of spiritual things; therefore in the things of religion, and in the things of this world, it has one and the same insignificance. It is the sensibility of the soul that must receive what this world can communicate to it; it is the sensibility of the soul that must receive what God can communicate: reason may follow after in either case, and view through its own glass what is done, but it can no do no more.

Reason may be here of the same service to us, as when we want any of the enjoyments of this life; it may direct us how and where they are to be had; it may take away a cover from our eyes, or open our window shutters when we want the light; but it can do no more towards seeing, than to make way for the light to act upon our eyes. This is all its office and ability in the things of religion; it may remove that which hinders the sensibility of the soul, or prevents the divine light’s acting upon it, but the activity of the mind upon its own ideas or images, which the senses have caused it to form from that which has been stirred up in them, but has nothing of the nature of that which it speculates upon by ideas; it does not become dark, when it reasons upon the cause or nature of darkness, nor becomes light, when it reasons about it; neither is it religion, nor gets anything of the nature of religion, when it is wholly taken up in descriptions and definitions of religious doctrines and virtues.

"For the good of religion is like the good of food and drink to the creature that wants it. And if instead of giving such an one bread and wine, you should teach him to seek for relief by attending to clear ideas of the nature of bread, of different ways of making it, etc., he would be left to die in the want of sustenance, just as the religion of reasoning leaves the soul to perish in the want of that good which it was to have from religion. And yet as a man may have the benefit of food much assisted by the right use of his reason, though reason has not the good of food in it, so a man may have the good of religion much assisted and secured to him, by the right use of his reason, though reason has not the good of religion in it. And as it would be great folly and perverseness, to accuse a man as an enemy to the true use of reasoning about food, because he declares that reason is not food, nor can supply the place of it, so is it equally such, to accuse a man as an enemy to the use of reasoning in religion, because he declares that reasoning is not religion, nor can supply the place of it. We have no want of religion, but because we want to have more of the divine nature in us than we have in our fallen nature. But if this be the truth of the matter (and who can deny it?) then we are sure that nothing can be our good in religion, but that which communicates to us something of God, or which alters our state of existence in God, and makes us partakers of the divine nature, in such a manner and degree as we wanted. What a folly is it then to put any trust in a religion of rational notions and opinions logically deduced from scripture words? Do we not see sinners of all sorts, and men under the power of every corrupt passion, equally zealous for such a religion? Proof enough, that it has not the good of religion in it, nor any contrariety to the vices of the heart; it neither kills them, nor is killed by them. For as pride, hypocrisy, envy or malice, do not take away from the mind its geometrical or critical abilities; so a man may be most logical in his religion of reason, words, doctrines, and opinions, when he has nothing of the true good of religion in him. "But as soon as it is known and confessed, that all the happiness or misery of all creatures consists only in this, as they are more or less possessed of God, or as they differently partake of this divine nature, then it must be equally known, that nothing but God can do or be any religious good to us, and also that God cannot do, or be any religious good to us, but by the communication of himself, or the manifestation of his own life within us."

Hence may be seen the great and like blindness both of infidels and Christians; the one in trusting to their own reason dwelling in its own logical conclusions; the other in trusting to their own reason dwelling in learned opinions about scripture words and phrases, and doctrines built upon them. "For as soon as it is known and confessed, that God is all in all, that in him we live and move and have our

being, that we can have nothing separately, or out of him, but everything in him, that we have no being or degree of being but in him, that he can give us nothing as our good but himself, nor any degree of salvation from our fallen nature, but in such degree as he again communicates something more of himself to us, as soon as this is known, then it is known with the utmost evidence, that to put a religious trust in our own reason, whether confined to itself, or working in doctrines about scripture words, has the nature of that same idolatry that puts a religious trust in the sun, a departed saint, or a graven image." (Demonstration of the Gross Errors in the Plain Account, etc.) And as image-worship has often boasted of its divine power, because of the wonders of zeal and devotion that have been raised thereby in thousands, and ten thousands of its followers, so it is no marvel, if opinion-worship should often have and boast of the same effects. But the truth of the whole matter lies here: as the WORD manifested in the flesh or become man, is the one mediator, or restorer of union between God and man, so to seeing eyes it must be evident, that nothing but this one mediatorial nature of Christ, essentially brought to life in our souls, can be our salvation through Christ Jesus. For that which saved and exalted that humanity in which Christ dwelt, must be the salvation of every human creature in the world.

But to return. What poor divinity knowledge comes from great scholars, and great readers, may be sufficiently seen from the two following judicious quotations in a late Dissertation on Enthusiasm; the one is taken from Dr. Warburton's sermons, the other from a pastoral letter of Mr. Stinstra, a preacher among the Mennonists of Friesland. That from Dr.

Warburton stands thus: "By them (that is, by the writings of the New Testament) the prophetic promise of our savior, that the comforter should abide for ever, was eminently fulfilled. For though his ordinary influence occasionally assists the faithful, yet his constant abode and supreme illumination is in the sacred scriptures." (Dissertation, page 10.) Dr.

Warburton's doctrine is this, that the inspired books of the New Testament is that comforter, or spirit of truth, and illuminator, which is meant by Christ's being always with his church. Let us therefore put the doctor's doctrine into the letter of the text, which will best show how true or false it is.

Our Lord says, "It is expedient for you that I go away, or that comforter will not come"; that is, it is expedient for you, that I leave off teaching you in words, that sound only into your outward ears, that

you may have the same words in writing, for your outward eyes to look upon; for if I do not depart from this vocal way of teaching you, the comforter will not come, that is, ye will not have the comfort of my words written on paper. But if I go away, I will send written books, which shall lead you into such a truth of words as you could not have, whilst they were only spoken from my mouth; but being written on paper, they will be my spiritual, heavenly, constant abode with you, and the most supreme illustration you can receive from me.

Christ says further: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you"; that is, though you cannot be sufficiently instructed from my words at present, yet when they shall hereafter come to you in written books, they will give you a knowledge of all truth, for they shall not speak of themselves, but shall receive words from me, and show them unto you. Again, Christ says, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father." That is, hitherto you have only had spoken proverbs from me, and therefore you have not plainly known the Father; but the time cometh when these spoken proverbs shall be put into writing, and then you shall plainly know the Father. Again, Christ adds. "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." That is, you are now troubled at my personal departure from you, but some written books shall be my seeing you again, and in that visit you shall have such joy as cannot be taken from you.

Christ also says, "If any man loves me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." That is, according to the doctor's theology, certain books of scripture will come to him, and make their abode with him; for he expressly confines the constant abode and supreme illumination of God to the holy scriptures. Therefore (horrible to say) God's inward presence, his operating power of life and light in our souls, his dwelling in us, and we in him, is something of a lower nature, that only may occasionally happen, and has less of God in it than the dead letter of scripture, which alone is his constant abode and supreme illumination. Miserable fruits of a paradoxical genius!

Christ from heaven says, “Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open unto me, I will come into him and sup with him.” This is his true eminent fulfilling of his prophetic promise of being a comforter, and spirit of truth to his church to the end of the world. But according to the doctor, we are to understand, that not the heavenly Christ, but the New Testament continually stands and knocks at the door, wanting to enter into the heart, and sup with it; which is no better than holding, that when Christ calls himself alpha and omega, he means not himself, but the New Testament. Again, “I am the vine, ye are the branches; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me, ye can do nothing.” Now take the doctor’s comment, and then the truth of all these words of Christ was only temporary, and could be true no longer, than till the books of the New Testament were written; for then all this, which Christ has affirmed of himself, of the certainty and necessity of his life and power in them, ended in Christ, and passed over to the written words of the New Testament, and they are the true vine, and we its branches, they are that without which we can do nothing. For thus it must be, if, as the doctor affirms, the writings of the New Testament are that, by which we are to understand the constant abode and supreme illumination of God in man. Now absurd, and even blasphemous, as this interpretation of the foregoing text it, it must be evident to every reader, that it is all the doctor’s own; for the letter of scripture is only made here to claim that divinity to itself, which the doctor has openly affirmed to be true of it. “Rabbi,” says Nicodemus to Christ, “we know that thou art a teacher come from God.” Now that which was here truly said of Christ in the flesh, is the very truth that must be said of the scripture teaching in ink and paper; it is a teacher come from God, and therefore fully to be believed, highly reverenced, and strictly followed. But as Christ’s teaching in the flesh was only preparatory to his future vital teaching by the Spirit, so the teaching of scripture by words written with ink and paper is only preparatory, or introductory to all that inward essential teaching of God, which is by his Spirit and truth within us. Every other opinion of the holy scripture, but that of an outward teacher and guide to God’s inward teaching and illumination in our souls, is but making an idol-God of it: I say an idol-God; for to those who rest in it as the constant abode and supreme illumination of God with them, it can be nothing else. For, if nothing of divine faith, love, hope, or goodness, can have the least birth, or place in us, but by divine inspiration, they who think these virtues may be sufficiently raised in us by the letter of scripture, do in truth and reality make the letter of scripture their inspiring God. The apostles preached and wrote to the people by divine inspiration. But what do they say of their inspired doctrine and teachings? What virtue and power was there in them?

Do they say that their words and teachings were the very promised comforter, the spirit of truth, the true abode and supreme illumination of God in the souls of men? So far from such a blasphemous thought, that they affirm the direct contrary, and compare all their inspired teachings and instructions to the dead works of bare planting and watering, and which must continue dead, till life comes into them from another and much higher power. "I have planted," says St. Paul, "Apollos has watered, but God gave the increase." And then further to show that this planting and watering, which was the highest work that an inspired apostle could do, was yet in itself to be considered as a lifeless, powerless thing, he adds, "So then, neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." But now, if this must be said of all that which the inspired apostles taught in outward words, that it was nothing in itself, was without power, without life, and only such a preparation towards life, as is that of planting and watering, must not that same be said of their inspired teachings, when left behind them in writing? For what else are the apostolical scriptures, but those very instructions and teachings put into writing, which they affirmed to be but bare planting and watering, quite powerless in themselves, till the living Spirit of God worked with them? Or will anyone say, that what Paul, Peter, John, etc., spoke by inspiration from their own mouths, was indeed bare planting and watering, in order to be capable of receiving life from God; but when these apostolical teachings and instructions were written on paper, they were raised out of their first inability, got the nature of God himself, became spirit and life, and might be called the great quickening power of God, or, as the doctor says, the constant abode and supreme illumination of his Spirit with us?

It would be great folly and perverseness, to charge me here with slighting, or lessening the true value, use, and importance of the inspired apostolical scriptures; for if the charge was just, it must lie against Paul, and not against me, since I say nothing of them, but that which he says, and in his own express words, viz., that all their labor of preaching, instructing, and writing by divine inspiration, had in themselves no other nature, use, or power, than that of such planting and watering as could not fructify till a higher power than was in them gave life and growth to that which they planted and watered.

I exceedingly love, and highly reverence the divine authority of the sacred writings of the apostles and evangelists, and would gladly persuade everyone, to be as deeply affected with them, and pay as profound a regard to them, as they would to an Elijah, a St. John Baptist, or a Paul

whom they knew to be immediately sent from heaven with God's message to them. I reverence them as a literal truth of and from God, as much the greatest heavenly blessing that can be outwardly bestowed upon us. I reverence them as doing, or fitted to do all that good amongst Christians now, which the apostles did in their day, and as of the same use and benefit to the church of every age, as their planting and watering was to the first.

But now, if this is not thought that fullness of regard that is due to the holy messengers of God; if anyone will still be so learnedly wise, as to affirm, that though Paul's preaching in his epistles, whilst he was alive, was indeed only bare planting and watering, but the same epistles, being published after his death, got another nature, became full of divine and living power, such a one has no right to laugh (as the doctor does) at the silly Mahometan, who believes the Alcoran to be uncreated. For wherever there is divine efficacy, there, there must be an uncreated power. And if, as the doctor says, the scriptures of the New Testament are the only constant abode and supreme illumination of the Spirit of God with us, all that is said of the eternal Spirit of God, of the uncreated light, might and ought to be said of them; that they are the WORD that was God, was with God, and are our true Immanuel, or God within us.

I shall now only add this friendly hint to the doctor, that he has a remedy at hand in his own sermon, how he may be delivered from thus grossly mistaking the spirit of the gospel, as well as the Law of Moses. St. Paul, (says the doctor) "had a quick and lively imagination, and an extensive and intimate acquaintance with those masters in moral painting, the classic writers, (N.B.) all which he proudly sacrificed to the glory of the everlasting gospel." (Sermons, vol i., page 229.)

Now if the doctor did that, though it was only from humility, which he says the apostle did proudly, such humility might be as great a good to him, as that pride was to the apostle. And indeed, one would have thought, that as soon as the doctor had discovered these writers to be only great masters in moral painting, it should have had the same effect upon him, as if he had found them great masters in delusion. For where there is moral painting, there, there is moral delusion. And the spirit, the life, the purity, and divine simplicity of gospel truth, is more eluded, lost, and destroyed by moral paintings, whether in books or pulpits, than by any material colorings put upon images of wood or clay, to excite spiritual devotion in churches.

Again, if the everlasting gospel is now as glorious a thing, as it was in St. Paul's days; if the highest, most accomplished classic knowledge is so unsuitable to the light and Spirit of the gospel, that it is fit for nothing but to be cast away, or as the doctor says, "to be all sacrificed to the glory of the gospel," how wonderful is it, that this should never come into his head from the beginning to the end of his three long Legation-volumes, or that he should come piping hot with fresh and fresh classic beauties found out by himself in a Shakespeare, a Pope, etc., to preach from the pulpit the divine wisdom of a loss and dung, that by so doing he might win Christ, and be found in him!

Let it be supposed, that our Lord was to come again for a while in the flesh, and that his coming was for this end, to do that for the Christian world cumbered with much learning, which he did to poor Martha, only cumbered with much serving, who thereby neglected that good part which Mary had chosen; must we suppose that the doctor would hasten to meet him with his sacred alliances, his bundles of pagan trash, and hieroglyphic profundities, as his full proof that Mary's good part, which shall never be taken from her, had been chosen for himself and all his readers? As well might it be thought, that the pope would come richly laden with his blessed images, his heavenly decrees, his divine bulls, as infallible proofs of his being born again from above, and solely devoted to the one thing needful.

Let the doctor figure to himself the gaudy pageantry of a divine high mass in a Romish cathedral; let him wonder at that flagrant daring contrariety that it hath to that first gospel-church of Christ, viz., "where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them"; would he not be still fuller of wonder, if he should hear the pope declaring that all this heathenish show of invented fopperies was his projected defense of that first church of Christ? But if the doctor would see a Protestant wonder full as great, he need only look at his own theatrical parading show of heathen mysteries, and heathenish learning, set forth in highest pomp. To what end? Why to bring forth, what he calls (as the pope above) his projected defense of Christianity.

O vainest of all vain projects! For what is Christianity, but that which Christ was whilst on earth? What can it be, but that which it is, and has from him? He is a king, who has all power in heaven and on earth, and his kingdom, like himself, is not of this world. Away then with the projects of popish pomp, and pagan literature to support it; they are as wise contrivances, as a high tower of Babel to defend it against the gates of hell.

I come now to the quotation from the pastoral letter of Mr. Stinstra. “A judicious writer,” (says the Dissertation), “observes, that sound understanding and reason are that on which, and by which, God principally operates (N.B.) when he finds it proper to assist (N.B.) our weakness by his Spirit.” (Dissertation, page 73.)

I cannot more illustrate the sense, or extol the judgment, both of the author, and quoter of this striking passage, than by the following words. “A judicious naturalist observes, that sound and strong lungs are that on which, and by which, the air or spirit of this world principally operates, when (N.B.) he finds it proper to assist, (N.B.) the weakness of our lungs, by his breathing into them.” Now if any right minded man should happen to find his heart edified, his understanding enlightened, by the above passage on divine inspiration, he will be much pleased at my assuring him, that the pastoral letter of Mr. Stinstra, and the Dissertation on Enthusiasm by Mr. Green, are from the beginning to the end full as good, in every respect, as that is.

These two instances are proof enough, that as soon as any man trusts to natural abilities, skill in languages, and commonplace learning, as the true means of entering into the kingdom of God, a kingdom, which is nothing else but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, he gives himself up to certain delusion, and can escape no error that is popular, or that suits his state and situation in the learned, religious world. He has sold his birth-right in the gospel state of divine illumination, to make a figure and noise with the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of the natural man.

Whence is it, that we see genius and natural abilities to be equally pleased with, and equally contending for the errors and absurdities of every system of religion, under which they are educated? It is because genius and natural abilities are just the same things, and must have the same nature now, as they had in the ancient schools of the peripatetic, academic, stoic, and atheistical philosophers. “The temptation of honor, which the academic exercise of wit” (as Dr. W. says) “was supposed to bring to its professor,” (Divine Legation of Moses, Book I., page 33.) has still its power among church disputants. Nor can it possibly ever be otherwise, till parts and genius, etc., do, as the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and lepers formerly did, go to be healed of their natural disorders by the inspiration of that oracle, who said, “I am the light of the world, he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness.” “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Well therefore might St. Paul say, “I have determined to know nothing among you, but Christ, and him crucified.” And had it not

been for this determination, he had never known, what he then knew, when he said, "The life that I now live, is not mine, but Christ's that liveth in me." Now did the apostle here overstretch the matter? Was it a spirit of enthusiasm, and not of Christ living in him, that made this declaration? Was he here making way for ignorance and darkness to extinguish the light that came down from heaven, and was the light of the world? Did he here undermine the true ground and rock on which the church of Christ was to stand, and prevail against the gates of hell? Did he by setting up this knowledge, as the best and only knowledge that an apostle need to have, break down the fences of Christ's vineyard, rob the church of all its strong holds, leave it defenseless, without a pale, and a ready prey to infidels? Who can say this, but that "spirit of anti-Christ, that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?" For, as Christ's intending nothing, knowing nothing, willing nothing, but purely and solely the whole course of his crucifying process, was the whole truth of his being come in the flesh, was his doing the whole will of him that sent him, was his overcoming the world, death, and hell, so he that embraces this process, as Christ embraces it, who is wholly given up to it, as Christ was, he has the will of Christ, and the mind of Christ, and therefore may well desire to know nothing else. To this man alone, is the world, death, and hell, known to be overcome in him, as they were in Christ; to him alone is Christ become the resurrection and the life; and he that knows this, he knows with St. Paul that all other knowledge may, and will be cast away as dung. Now if St. Paul, having rejected all other knowledge but that of a crucified savior, which to the Jew was a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness, if he had afterwards wrote three such Legation-volumes as the doctor has done, for the food and nourishment of Christ's sheep, who can have no life in them but by eating the true bread that came down from heaven, must they not have been called Paul's full recantation of all that he had taught of a Christ crucified?

The other instance of delusion from book learning, relates to Mr. Green, who wanting to write on divine inspiration, runs from book to book, from country to country, to pick up reports wherever he could find them, concerning divine inspiration, from this and that judicious author, that so he might be sure of compiling a judicious dissertation on the subject. All which he might have known to be mere delusion and lost labor, had he but remembered, or regarded any one single saying either of Christ or his apostles concerning the Holy Spirit and his operations. For not a word is said by them, but fully shows that all knowledge or perception of the Spirit is nothing else but the enjoyment of the Spirit, and that no man can know more of him than that which the Spirit himself is, and does, and manifests of his power in man. "The things of God," says St. Paul, "knoweth no man, but the Spirit

of God." Is not this decisive upon the matter? Is not this proof enough, that nothing in man but the Spirit of God in him, can know what the Spirit's work in man is and does? The fruits of the Spirit, so often mentioned in scripture, are not things different, or separate from the Spirit; and if the Spirit is not always working in us, his fruits must be as absent from us as he is. St. John says, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." A demonstration, that the Spirit can no other way make himself known to us, but by his dwelling and working in us. St. James says, "Every good and perfect gift cometh from ABOVE": but now does not he in reality deny this, who seeks for the highest gift of knowledge from BELOW, from the poor contrivance of a commonplace book? Again, "if any man lacketh wisdom, let him ask it of God"; St. James does not say, let him go ask Peter, or Paul, or John, because he knew that divine wisdom was nothing else, but divine inspiration. But Mr. Green has got together his ingenious, his eminent writers, his excellent, learned, judicious authors, his cool, rational-morality doctors (a set of men whose glorious names we read no more of in the gospel, than of the profound Aristotle, or the divine Cicero) and these are to do that for him, which the whole college of apostles could do for nobody. Now this doctrine, that nothing but the Spirit can know the things that be of God, and that the enjoyment of the Spirit, is all the knowledge that we can have of him, is a truth taught us, not only by all scripture, but by the whole nature of things. For everything that can be seen, known, heard, felt, etc., must be manifested by itself, and not by another. It is not possible for anything but light to manifest light, nor for anything but darkness to make darkness to be known. Yet this is more possible, than for anything but divine inspiration to make divine inspiration to be known. Hence there is a degree of delusion still higher, to be noted in such writers as Mr. Green; for his collection of ingenious, eminent, rational authors, of whom he asks counsel concerning the necessity or certainty of the immediate inspiration of the Spirit, are such as deny it, and write against it. Therefore the proceeding is just as wise, as if a man was to consult some ingenious and eminent atheists, about the truth and certainty of God's immediate continual providence; or ask a few selected Deists, how, or what he was to believe of the nature and power of gospel faith. Now there are the Holy Spirit's own operations, and there are reports about them. The only true reports, are those that are made by inspired persons; and if there were no such persons, there could be no true reports of the matter. And therefore to consult uninspired persons, and such as deny and reproach the pretense to inspiration, to be rightly instructed about the truth of immediate continual divine inspiration, is a degree of blindness greater than can be charged upon the old Jewish scribes and Pharisees.

The reports that are to be acknowledged as true concerning the Holy Spirit and his operations, are those that are recorded in scripture; that is, the scriptures are an infallible history, or relation of that which the Holy Spirit is, and does, and works in true believers; and also an infallible direction how we are to seek, and wait, and trust in his good power over us. But then the scriptures themselves, though thus true and infallible in these reports and instructions about the Holy Spirit, yet they can go no further than to be a true history; they cannot give to the reader of them the possession, the sensibility, and enjoyment of that which they relate. This is plain, not only from the nature of a written history or instruction, but from the express words of our Lord, saying, "Except a man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God." Therefore the new birth from above, or of the Spirit, is that alone which gives true knowledge and perception of that which is the kingdom of God. The history may relate truths enough about it; but the kingdom of God, being nothing else but the power and presence of God, dwelling and ruling in our souls, this can only manifest itself, and can manifest itself to nothing in man but to the new birth. For everything else in man is deaf and dumb and blind to the kingdom of God; but when that which died in Adam is made alive again by the quickening Spirit from above, this being the birth which came at first from God, and a partaker of the divine nature, this knows, and enjoys the kingdom of God. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," says Christ: this record of scripture is true; but what a delusion, for a man to think that he knows and finds this to be true, and that Christ is all this benefit and blessing to him, because he assents, consents, and contends, it may be, for the truth of those words.

This is impossible. The new birth is here again the only power of entrance; everything else knocks at the door in vain: I know you not says Christ to everything, but the new birth. "I am the way, the truth and the life"; this tells us neither more nor less, than if Christ had said, I am the kingdom of God, into which nothing can enter, but that which is born of the Spirit.

Here again may be seen, in the highest degree of certainty, the absolute necessity of immediate divine inspiration through every part of the Christian life. For if a birth of the Spirit is that alone that can enter into, or receive the kingdom of God come amongst men, that alone which can find Christ to be the way, the truth and the life, then a continual life or breathing of the Spirit in us, must be as necessary as the first birth of the Spirit. For a birth of the Spirit is only to make a beginning of a life of the Spirit: birth is only in order to life; if therefore the life of the Spirit continues not, the birth is

lost, and the cessation of its breathing in us is nothing else but death again to the kingdom of God, that is, to everything that is or can be godly.

Therefore the immediate continual inspiration of the Spirit, as the only possible power and preservation of a godly life, stands upon the same ground, and is as absolutely necessary to salvation, as the new birth.

Take away this power and working life of the Spirit from being the one life of all that is done in the church, and then, though it be ever so outwardly glorious in its extent, or ever so full of learned members, it can be nothing else in the sight of God but the wise Greeks and the carnal Jews become a body of water-baptized Christians. For no one can be in a better state than this, the wisdom of the Greek, the carnality of the Jew, must have the whole government of him, till he is born of and led by the Spirit of God; this alone is the kingdom of God, and everything else is the kingdom of this world, in which Satan is declared to be the prince. Poor, miserable man! that strives, with all the sophistry of human wit, to be delivered from the immediate continual operation and governance of the Spirit of God, not considering, that where God is not, there is the devil, and where the Spirit rules not, there all is the work of the flesh, though nothing be talked of but spiritual and Christian matters. I say talked of; for the best ability of the natural man can go no further than talk, and notions, and opinions about scripture words and facts; in these, he may be a great critic, an acute logician, a powerful orator, and know everything of scripture, except the Spirit and the truth.

How much then is it to be lamented, as well as impossible to be denied, that though all scripture assures us, that the things of the Spirit of God are and must, to the end of the world, be foolishness to the natural man, yet from one end of learned Christendom to the other, nothing is thought of as the true and proper means of attaining divine knowledge, but that which every natural, selfish, proud, envious, false, vain-glorious, worldly man can do. Where is that divinity student who thinks, or was ever taught to think, of partaking of the light of the gospel any other way, than by doing with the scriptures that which he does with pagan writers, whether poets, orators, or comedians, viz., exercise his logic, rhetoric, and critical skill, in descanting upon them? This done, he is thought by himself, and often by others, to have a sufficiency of divine apostolical knowledge. What wonder therefore, if it should sometimes happen, that the very same vain, corrupt, puffing literature, that raises one man to be a poet-laureate, should set another in a divinity chair?

How is it that the logical, critical, learned Deist comes by his infidelity?

Why just by the same help of the same good powers of the natural man, as many a learned Christian comes to know, embrace, and contend for the faith of the gospel. For, drop the power and reality of divine inspiration, and then all is dropped that can set the believer above, or give him any godly difference from the infidel. For the Christian's faith has no goodness in it, but that it comes from above, is born of the Spirit; and the Deist's infidelity has no badness in it, but because it comes from below, is born of the will of the flesh and the will of men, and rejects the necessity of being born again out of the corruption of fallen nature. The Christian therefore that rejects, reproaches, and writes against the necessity of immediate divine inspiration, pleads the whole cause of infidelity; he confirms the ground, on which it stands; and has nothing to prove the goodness of his own Christianity, but that which equally proves to the Deist the goodness of his infidelity. For without the new birth, or which is the same thing, without immediate continual divine inspiration, the difference between the Christian and the infidel is quite lost; and whether the uninspired unregenerate son of Adam be in the church, or out of the church, he is still that child of this world, that fallen Adam, and mere natural man, to whom the things of the Spirit of God are and must be foolishness. For a full proof of this no more need be seen, than that which you cannot help seeing, that the same shining virtues, and the same glaring vices are common to them both. For the Christian, not made such by the Spirit of God continually inspiring and working in him, has only a Christianity of his own making, and can have only such appearances of virtues, and will have such reality of vices, as natural self wants to have. Let him therefore renounce what is called natural religion as much as he will, yet unless he is a new born and divinely inspired Christian, he must live and die in all his natural corruption.

Through all scripture nothing else is aimed at or intended for man, as his Christianity, but the divine life, nor anything hinted at, as having the least power to raise or beget it, but the holy life-giving Spirit of God. How gross therefore is that blindness, which reading the gospel, and the history of gospel Christians, cannot see these two fundamental truths, (1) "That nothing is divine knowledge in man, but the divine life": (2) "That the divine life is nothing else but a birth of the divine nature within him"?

But this truth being lost or given up, vain learning and a worldly spirit, being in possession of the gospel-book, set up kingdoms of strife and division. For what end? Why, that the unity of the church may not be lost.

Multiply systems of empty notions and opinions: for what? Why, that words and forms may do that for the church now, which to the first church, of Christ's own forming, could only be done by being born of the Spirit.

Hence it is, that the scripture-scholar is looked upon as having divine knowledge of its matters, when he is as ready at chapter and verse, as the critic is at every page of Cicero. And nothing is looked upon as defective in divinity knowledge, but such supposed mistakes of the genius of the Hebrew, or Greek letter, as the sublime students of the immortal words of a Milton, or a Shakespeare, charge as blunders upon one another.

Now to call such scripture skill divine knowledge, is just as solid and judicious, as if a man was said, or thought to know, that which St. John knew, because he could say his whole gospel and epistles by heart, without missing a word of them. For a literal knowledge of scripture is but like having all scripture in the memory, and is so far from being a divine perception of the things spoken of, that the most vicious wicked scholar in the world may attain to the highest perfection in it. But divine knowledge and wickedness of life are so inconsistent, that they are mutual death and destruction to one another; where the one is alive, the other must be dead.

Judas Iscariot knew Jesus Christ, and all that he said and did to his crucifixion; he knew what it was to be at the Lord's table, and to partake of his supper of bread and wine. But yet, with much more truth it may be said, that he knew nothing of all this, and had no better knowledge of it than Pontius Pilate had. Now all knowledge of Christ, but that which is from divine inspiration, or the new birth, is but as poor and profitless, as Judas his knowledge was. It may say to Christ, as he did, Hail master; but no one can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. This empty letter-learned knowledge, which the natural man can as easily have of the sacred scripture and religious matters, as of any other books or human affairs, this being taken for divine knowledge, has spread such darkness and delusion all over Christendom, as may be reckoned no less than a general apostasy from the gospel

state of divine illumination. For the gospel state is in its whole nature nothing else; it has but one light, and that is the Lamb of God; it has but one life, and that is by the Spirit of God.

Whatever is not of and from this light, and governed by this Spirit, call it by what high name you will, is no more a part of the gospel state, nor will have a better end, than that which entereth into the mouth, and corrupteth in the belly.

That one light and Spirit, which was only one from all eternity, before angels or any heavenly beings were created, must to all eternity be that one only light and Spirit, by which angels or men can ever have any union or communion with God. Every other light is but the light whence beasts have their sense and subtlety; every other spirit, is but that which gives to flesh and blood all its lusts and appetites. Nothing else but the loss of the one light and Spirit of God turned an order of angels into devils. Nothing else but the loss of that same light and Spirit took from the divine Adam his first crown of paradisaical glory, stripped him more naked than the beasts, and left him a prey to devils, and in the jaws of eternal death. What therefore can have the least share of power towards man's redemption, but the light and Spirit of God making again a birth of themselves in him, as they did in his first glorious creation? Or what can possibly begin, or bring forth this return of his first lost birth, but solely that which is done by this eternal light and Spirit. Hence it is, that the gospel state is by our Lord affirmed to be a kingdom of heaven at hand, or come among men, because it has the nature of no worldly thing or creaturely power, is to serve no worldly ends, can be helped by no worldly power, receives nothing from man but man's full denial of himself, stands upon nothing that is finite or transitory, has no existence but in that working power of God that created and upholds heaven and earth, and is a kingdom of God become man, and a kingdom of men united to God, through a continual immediate divine illumination. What scripture of the New Testament can you read, that does not prove this to be the gospel state, a kingdom of God, into which none can enter but by being born of the Spirit, none can continue to be alive in it but by being led by the Spirit, and in which not a thought, or desire, or action, can be allowed to have any part in it, but as it is a fruit of the Spirit? "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What is God's kingdom in heaven, but the manifestation of what God is, and what he does in his heavenly creatures? How is his will done there, but because his Holy Spirit is the life, the power, and mover of all that live in it. We daily read this prayer, we extol it under the name of the Lord's Prayer, and yet (for the sake of

orthodoxy) preach and write against all that is prayed for in it. For nothing but a continual, essential, immediate divine illumination can do that which we pray may be done.

For where can God's kingdom be come, but where every other power but his is at an end, and driven out of it? How can his will only be done, but where the Spirit that wills in God wills in the creature?

What now have parts, and literature, and the natural abilities of man, that they can do here? Just as much as they can do at the resurrection of the dead; for all that is to be done here is nothing else but resurrection and life.

Therefore, that which gave eyes to the blind, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, and raised the dead, that alone can and must do all that is to be done in this gospel kingdom of God. For every the smallest work or fruit of grace must be as solely done by God, as the greatest miracle in nature; and the reason is, because every work of grace is the same overcoming of nature, as when the dead are raised to life. Yet vain man would be thought to be something, to have great power and ability in this kingdom of grace, not because he has happened to be made a scholar, has run through all languages and histories, has been long exercised in conjectures and criticisms, and has his head as full of all notions, theological, poetical, and philosophical, as a dictionary is full of all sorts of words.

Now let this simple question decide the whole matter here: has this great scholar any more power of saying to this mountain, "Be thou removed hence, and cast into the sea," than the illiterate Christian has? If not, he is just as weak, as powerless, and little in the kingdom of God as he is. But if the illiterate man's faith should happen to be nearer to the bulk of a grain of mustard seed, than that of the prodigious scholar, the illiterate Christian stands much above him in the kingdom of God.

Look now at the present state of Christendom, glorying in the light of Greek and Roman learning (which an age or two ago broke forth) as a light that has helped the gospel to shine with a luster, that it scarce ever had before. Look at this, and you will see the fall of the present church from its first gospel state, to have much likeness to the fall of the first divine man from the glory of paradisaical innocence and heavenly purity into an earthly state, and bestial life of worldly craft and serpentine subtlety.

In the first gospel church, heathen light had no other name than heathen darkness; and the wisdom of words was no more sought after, than that friendship of the world which is enmity with God. In that new born church, the tree of life, which grew in the midst of paradise, took root and grew up again. In the present church, the tree of life is hissed at, as the visionary food of deluded enthusiasts; and the tree of death, called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, has the eyes and hearts of priest and people, and is thought to do as much good to Christians, as it did evil to the first inhabitants of paradise. This tree, that brought death and corruption into human nature at first, is now called a tree of light, and is day and night well watered with every corrupt stream, however distant, or muddy with earth, that can be drawn to it.

The simplicity indeed, both of the gospel letter and doctrine, has the shine and polish of classic literature laid thick upon it. Cicero is in the pulpit, Aristotle writes Christian ethics, Euclid demonstrates infidelity and absurdity to be the same thing. Greece had but one Longinus, Rome had but one Quintilian; but in our present church, they are as common as patriots in the state.

But now, what follows from this new risen light? Why, Aristotle's atheism, Cicero's height of pride and depth of dissimulation, and every refined or gross species of Greek and Roman vices, are as glaring in this new enlightened Christian church, as ever they were in old pagan Greece or Rome. Would you find a gospel-Christian in all this midday glory of learning, you may light a candle, as the philosopher did in the midday sun, to find an honest man.

And indeed, if we consider the nature of our salvation, either with respect to that which alone can save us, or that from which we are to be saved, it will be plain, that the wit and elegance of classic literature, brought into a Christian church to make the doctrines of the cross have a better salvation-effect upon fallen man, is but like calling in the assistance of balls and masquerades, to make the lent-penitence go deeper into the heart, and more effectually drive all levity and impurity out of it. How poorly was the gospel at first preached, if the wisdom of words, and the gifts of natural wit and imagination had been its genuine helps? But alas, they stand in the same contrariety to one another, as self-denial and self-gratification. To know the truth of gospel salvation, is to know that man's natural wisdom is to be equally sacrificed with his natural folly; for they are but one and the same thing, only called sometimes by one name, and sometimes by the other.

His intellectual faculties are, by the fall, in a much worse state than his natural animal appetites, and want a much greater self-denial. And when own will, own understanding, and own imagination have their natural strength indulged and gratified, and are made seemingly rich and honorable with the treasures acquired from a study of the belles letters, they will just as much help poor fallen man to be like-minded with Christ, as the art of cookery, well and daily studied, will help a professor of the gospel to the spirit and practice of Christian abstinence. To know all this to be strictly the truth, no more need be known, than these two things: (1) that our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or that which we are by nature; (2) that in the whole nature of things, nothing could be this salvation, or savior to us, but such an humility of God manifested in human nature, as is beyond all expression. Hence, the first unalterable term of this savior to fallen man, is this, "Except a man denies himself, forsakes all that he has, yea and his own life, he cannot be my disciple." And to show, that this is but the beginning, or ground of man's salvation, the savior adds, "Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of heart." What a light is here, for those that can bear, or love the light! Self is the whole evil of fallen nature; self-denial is our capacity of being saved; humility is our savior. This is every man's short lesson of life; and he that has well learned it, is scholar enough, and has had all the benefit of a most finished education. Then old Adam with all his ignorance is cast out of him; and when Christ's humility is learned, then he has the very mind of Christ, and that which brings him forth a son of God.

Who then can enough wonder at that bulk of libraries, which has taken place of this short lesson of the gospel, or at that number of champion disputants, who from age to age, have been all in arms to support and defend a set of opinions, doctrines, and practices, all which may be most cordially embraced, without the least degree of self-denial, and most firmly held fast, without getting the least degree of humility by it?

What a grossness of ignorance, both of man and his savior, to run to Greek and Roman schools to learn how to put off Adam, and to put on Christ?

To drink at the fountains of pagan poets and orators, in order more divinely to drink of the cup that Christ drank of? What can come of all this, but that which is already too much come, a Ciceronian-gospeller, instead of a gospel-penitent? Instead of the depth, the truth and spirit of the humble publican, seeking to regain paradise, only by a broken heart, crying, "God, be merciful to me a

sinner," the high-bred classic will live in daily transports at the enormous (See Milton's Enormous Bliss.) sublime of a Milton, flying thither on the unfeathered wings of high sounding words.

This will be more or less the case with all the salvation-doctrines of Christ, whilst under classical acquisition and administration. Those divine truths, which are no further good and redeeming, but as they are spirit and life in us, which can have no entrance, or birth, but in the death of self, in a broken and contrite heart, will serve only to help classic painters (as Dr. W (As this address was wrote some time ago, in which are certain strictures upon Dr. Warburton's writings, who has lately been consecrated a Right Reverend Lord Bishop; I thought it more candid not to alter my style, than to take the advantage of charging such gross errors on a Bishop of Gloucester, which I only found in a Mr. and Dr. Warburton.) calls them) to lavish out their colors on their own paper monuments of lifeless virtues.

How came the learned heathens by their pride and vanity, by their inability to come under the humility of the cross? It was because the natural man shined in the false glory of his own cultivated abilities. Have wit and parts, an elegant taste, any more good or redeeming virtue in Christians, than they had in heathens? As well might it be said, that own will is good, and has a redeeming virtue in a Christian, but bad and destructive in a heathen.

I said a redeeming virtue in it; because nothing is or can be a religious good to fallen man, but that which has a redeeming virtue in it, or is, so far as it goes, a true renewal of the divine life in the soul. Therefore, said our only redeemer, "Without me, ye can do nothing." Whatever is not his immediate work in us is at best but a mere nothing with respect to the good of our redemption. A tower of Babel may to its builders' eyes seem to hide its head in the clouds, but as to its reaching of heaven, it is no nearer to that, than the earth on which it stands. It is thus with all the buildings of man's wisdom and natural abilities in the things of salvation; he may take the logic of Aristotle, add to that the rhetoric of Tully, and then ascend as high as he can on the ladder of poetic imagination, yet no more is done to the reviving the lost life of God in his soul, than by a tower of brick and mortar to reach heaven.

Self is the root, the tree, and the branches of all the evils of our fallen state.

We are without God, because we are in the life of self. Self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking, are the very essence, and life of pride; and the devil the first father of pride, is never absent from them, nor without power in them. To die to these essential properties of self, is to make the devil depart from us. But as soon as we would have self-abilities have a share in our good works, the satanic spirit of pride is in union with us, and we are working for the maintenance of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking.

All the vices of fallen angels and men have their birth and power in the pride of self, or I may better say, in the atheism and idolatry of self; for self is both atheist and idolator. It is atheist, because it has rejected God; it is an idolator, because it is its own idol. On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. Not a joy, or glory, or praise in heaven, but is what it is through humility. It is humility alone that makes the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell. No angels in heaven, but because humility is in all their breath; no devils in hell, but because the fire of pride is their whole fire of life.

What is then, or in what lies the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between PRIDE and HUMILITY: all other things, be they what they will, are but as under workmen; pride and humility are the two master powers, the two kingdoms of strife for the eternal possession of man.

And here it is to be observed, that every son of Adam is in the service of pride and self, be he doing what he will, till a humility that comes solely from heaven has been his redeemer. Till then, all that he doth will be only done by the right hand, that the left hand may know it. And he that thinks it possible for the natural man to get a better humility than this from his own right reason (as it is often miscalled) refined by education, shows himself quite ignorant of this one most plain and capital truth of the gospel, namely, that there never was, nor ever will be, but one humility in the whole world, and that is the one humility of Christ, which never any man, since the fall of Adam, had the least degree of but from Christ. Humility is one, in the same sense and truth, as Christ is one, the mediator is one, redemption is one. There are not two Lambs of God that take away the sins of the world. But if there was any humility besides that of Christ, there would be something else besides him that could take away the sins of the world. "All that came before me," says Christ, "were thieves and robbers": we are used to confine this to persons; but the same is as true of every virtue, whether it has the name of humility, charity, piety, or anything else; if it comes before Christ, however good it may pretend to

be, it is but a cheat, a thief, and a robber, under the name of godly virtue. And the reason is, because pride and self have the all of man, till man has his all from Christ. He therefore only fights the good fight, whose strife is, that the self-idolatrous nature which he hath from Adam may be brought to death, by the supernatural humility of Christ brought to life in him.

The enemies to man's rising out of the fall of Adam, through the Spirit and power of Christ, are many. But the one great dragon-enemy, called anti-Christ, is SELF-EXALTATION. This is his birth, his pomp, his power, and his throne; when self-exaltation ceases, the last enemy is destroyed, and all that came from the pride and death of Adam is swallowed up in victory.

There has been much sharp looking out, to see where and what anti-Christ is, or by what marks he may be known. Some say he has been in the Christian world almost ever since the gospel times, nay, that he was even then beginning to appear and show himself. Others say he came in with this, or that pope; others that he is not yet come, but near at hand. Others will have it, that he has been here, and there, but driven from one place to another by several new risen Protestant sects.

But to know with certainty, where and what anti-Christ is, and who is with him, and who against him, you need only read this short description which Christ gives of himself. "(1) I can do nothing of myself. (2) I came not to do my own will. (3) I seek not my own glory. (4) I am meek and lowly of heart." Now if this is Christ, then self-ability or self-exaltation, being the highest and fullest contrariety to all this, must be alone the one great anti-Christ, that opposes and withstands the whole nature and Spirit of Christ.

What therefore has everyone so much to fear, to renounce and abhor, as every inward sensibility of self-exaltation, and every outward work that proceeds from it. But now, at what things shall a man look, to see that working of self which raises pride to its strongest life, and most of all hinders the birth of the humble Jesus in his soul? Shall he call the pomps and vanities of the world the highest works of self-adoration? Shall he look at the fops and beaux, and painted ladies, to see the pride that has the most of anti-Christ in it? No, by no means. These are indeed marks, shameful enough, of the vain, foolish heart of man, but yet, comparatively speaking, they are but the skin-deep follies of that pride which the fall of man has begotten and brought forth in him. Would you see the deepest root, and iron-strength of pride and self-adoration, you must enter into the dark chamber of man's fiery

soul, where the light of God (which alone gives humility and meek submission to all created spirits) being extinguished by the death which Adam died, Satan, or which is the same thing self-exaltation became the strong man that kept possession of the house, till a stronger than he should come upon him. In this secret source of an eternal fiery soul, glorying in the astral light of this world, a swelling kingdom of pomps and vanities is set up in the heart of man, of which, all outward pomps and vanities are but its childish transitory playthings. The inward strong man of pride, the diabolical self, has his higher works within; he dwells in the strength of the heart, and has every power and faculty of the soul offering continual incense to him. His memory, his will, his understanding, his imagination, are always at work for him, and for no one else. His memory is the faithful repository of all the fine things that self has ever done; and lest anything of them should be lost or forgotten, she is continually setting them before his eyes. His will, though it has all the world before it, yet goes after nothing, but as self sends it. His understanding is ever upon the stretch for new projects to enlarge the dominions of self; and if this fails, imagination comes in, as the last and truest support of self, she makes him a king and mighty Lord of castles in the air.

This is that full-born natural self, that must be pulled out of the heart, and totally denied, or there can be no disciple of Christ; which is only saying this plain truth, that the apostate self-idolatrous nature of the old man must be put off, or there can be no new creature in Christ.

Now what is it in the human soul that most of all hinders the death of this old man? What is it that above all other things strengthens and exalts the life of self, and makes it the master and governor of all the powers of the heart and soul? It is the fancied riches of parts, the glitter of genius, the flights of imagination, the glory of learning, and the self-conceited strength of natural reason: these are the strongholds of fallen nature, the master-builders of pride's temple in the heart of man, and which, as so many priests, keep up the daily worship of idol-self. And here let it be well, and well observed, that all these magnified talents of the natural man are started up through his miserable fall from the life of God in his soul. Wit, genius, learning, and natural reason, would never have had any more a name among men, than blindness, ignorance, and sickness, had man continued, as at first, an holy image of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Everything then that dwelt in him, or came from him, would have only said so much of God, and nothing of himself, have manifested nothing to him but the heavenly powers of the triune life

of God dwelling in him. He would have had no more sense or consciousness of his own wit, or natural reason, or any power of goodness in all that he was, and did, than of his own creating power, at beholding the created heavens and earth. It is his dreadful fall from the life of God in his soul, that has furnished him with the substantial riches of his bestial appetites and lusts. And when the lusts of the flesh have spent out their life, when the dark thick body of earthly flesh and blood shall be forced to let the soul go loose, all these bright talents will end with that system of fleshly lusts, in which they begun; and that of man which remains will have nothing of its own, nothing that can say, I do this, or I do that; but all that it has or does, will be either the glory of God manifested in it, or the power of hell in full possession of it. The time of man's playing with parts, wit, and abilities, and of fancying himself to be something great and considerable in the intellectual world, may be much shorter, but can be no longer, than he can eat and drink with the animals of this world. When the time comes, that fine buildings, rich settlements, acquired honors, and rabbi, rabbi, must take their leave of him, all the stately structures, which genius, learning, and flights of imagination, have painted inwardly on his brain and outwardly on paper, must bear full witness to Solomon's vanity of vanities.

Let then the high accomplished scholar reflect, that he comes by his wit, and parts, and acute abilities, just as the serpent came by his subtlety; let him reflect, that he might as well dream of acquiring angelic purity to his animal nature by multiplying new invented delights for his earthly passions and tempers, as of raising his soul into divine knowledge through the well exercised powers of his natural reason and imagination.

The finest intellectual power, and that which has the best help in it towards bringing man again into the region of divine light, is that poor despised thing called simplicity. This is that which stops the workings of the fallen life of nature, and leaves room for God to work again in the soul, according to the good pleasure of his holy will. It stands in such a waiting posture before God, and in such readiness for the divine birth, as the plants of the earth wait for the inflowing riches of the light and air. But the self-assuming workings of man's natural powers shut him up in himself, closely barred up against the inflowing riches of the light and Spirit of God.

Yet so it is, in this fallen state of the gospel church, that with these proud endowments of fallen nature, the classic scholar, full fraught with pagan light and skill, comes forth to play the critic and orator with the simplicity of salvation mysteries; mysteries which mean nothing else but the

inward work of the triune God in the soul of man, nor any other work there, but the raising up of a dead Adam into a living Christ of God.

However, to make way for parts, criticism, and language-learning, to have the full management of salvation doctrines, the well-read scholar gives out, that the ancient way of knowing the things of God, taught and practiced by fishermen-apostles, is obsolete. They indeed wanted to have divine knowledge from the immediate continual operation of the Holy Spirit, but this state was only for a time, till genius, and learning entered into the pale of the church. Behold, if ever, "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place!" For as soon as the doctrine is set up, that man's natural parts and acquired learning have full right and power to sit in the divinity chair, and to guide men into that truth which was once the only office and power of the Holy Spirit, as soon as this is done, and so far as it is received, it may with the greatest truth be said, that the kingdom of God is entirely shut up, and only a kingdom of scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, can come instead of it. For by this doctrine the whole nature and power of gospel religion is much more denied, than by setting up the infallibility of the pope; for though his claim to infallibility is false, yet he claims it from and under the Holy Spirit; but the Protestant scholar has his divinity knowledge, his power in the kingdom of truth, from himself, his own logic, and learned reason. Christ has nowhere instituted an infallible pope; and it is full as certain, that he has nowhere spoke one single word, or given the least power to logic, learning, or the natural powers of man, in his kingdom. He has never said to them, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven"; never said to them, "go ye and teach all nations," no more than he has ever said to wolves, "go ye, and feed my sheep." Christ indeed said of himself, according to the flesh, it is expedient for you that I go away. But where has he said of himself according to the spirit, "It is also expedient for you that I go away, that your own natural abilities and learned reason may have the guidance of you into all truth?"

This is nowhere said, unless logic can prove it from these words, "Without me ye can do nothing," and, "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world."

The first and main doctrine of Christ and his apostles was, to tell the Jews, "that the kingdom of God was at hand," or was come to them. Proof enough surely, that their church was not that kingdom of God, though by God's appointment, and under laws of his own commanding. But why not, when it was thus set up by God? It was because it had human and worldly things in it, consisted

of carnal ordinances, and had only types, and figures, and shadows of a kingdom of God that was to come. Of this kingdom, Christ says, “My kingdom is not of this world”; and as a proof of it, he adds, “if it was of this world, then would my servants fight for me”; which was saying, that it was so different in kind, and so superior in nature to this world, that no sort of worldly power could either help, or hinder it. But of this world, into which the kingdom of God was come, the holy one of God says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.” Now how was it that Christ’s victory was their victory? It was, because he was in them, and they in him, “Because I live, ye shall live also; in that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

This was the kingdom of God come to them, the same kingdom of God in which Adam was born and begun his first glorious life, when the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity had an outward glory, like that which broke through the body of Christ, when on “Mount Tabor his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” To the children of this kingdom, says its almighty king, “When they bring you before magistrates and powers, take no thought how, or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say unto them, for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in that same hour what ye ought to say. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.”

No higher, or other thing is here said, than in these other words, “Take no thought, what ye shall eat, or drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed, but seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” This is the truth of the kingdom of God, come unto men, and this is the birth-right privilege of all that are living members of it, to be delivered from their own natural spirit which they had from Adam, from the spirit and wisdom of this world, and through the whole course of their lives only to say, and do, and be that, which the Spirit of their Father worketh in them.

But now, is not this kingdom gone away from us, are we not left comfortless, if instead of this Spirit of our Father speaking, doing, and working everything in us and for us, we are left again to our own natural powers, to run to every Lo here, and Lo there, to find a share in that kingdom of God, which once was, and never can be anything else but God, the wisdom and power of God manifested in our flesh? Had it not been as well, nay better for us, to have been still under types and figures, sacrificing bulls and goats by divine appointment, than to be brought under a religion that must be spirit and life

and then left to the jarring interests of the wisdom of the Greek, and the carnality of the Jew, how to be living members of it? For where the Spirit of God is not the continual immediate governor of spiritual things, nothing better can come of it. For the truth and full proof of this, no more need be appealed to than all the libraries and churches of Christendom for many ages to this day.

What is the difference between man's own righteousness and man's own light in religion? They are strictly the same thing, do one and the same work, namely, keep up and strengthen every evil, vanity, and corruption of fallen nature. Nothing saves a man from his own righteousness, but that which saves and delivers him from his own light. The Jew that was most of all set against the gospel, and unable to receive it was he that trusted in his own righteousness; this was the rich man, to whom it was as hard to enter into the kingdom of heaven as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. But the Christian, that trusts in his own light, is the very Jew that trusted in his own righteousness; and all that he gets by the gospel, is only that which the Pharisee got by the Law, namely, to be further from entering into the kingdom of God than publicans and harlots. How comes it, that a beast, a scarlet whore, a horned dragon, and other the most horrible descriptions of diabolical power, have been by the Spirit of God made descriptions of the Christian church? How comes it, that the Spirit describes the gospel-church as driven into a wilderness; the two faithful witnesses, Moses and Jesus, as prophesying so many ages in sackcloth, and slain in the streets of spiritual Sodom and Egypt? It is because man's own natural light, man's own conceited righteousness, his serpentine subtlety, his self-love, his sensual spirit and worldly power, have seized the mysteries of salvation that came down from heaven, and built them up into a kingdom of envious strife and contention, for learned glory, spiritual merchandise, and worldly power. This is the beast, the whore, and dragon, that has governed, and will govern in every private Christian, and public church, till, dead to all that is self, they turn to God; not to a God that they have only heard of with their ears, and their fathers have told them, but to a God of life, light, and power, found living and working within them, as the essential life, light, and power of their own lives. For God is only our God, by a birth of his own divine nature within us. This, and nothing but this, is our whole relation to, our only fellowship with him, our whole knowledge of him, our whole power of having any part in the mysteries of gospel-salvation. Nothing can seek the kingdom of God, or hunger and thirst after his righteousness, nothing can cry, "Abba Father," nothing can pray, "Thy kingdom come," nothing can say of Christ, "My Lord, and my God," but that which is born of God, and is the divine nature itself become creaturely in us. Nothing but God in man can be a godly life in man. Hence is that of the

apostle, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." But you will say, can this be true of the spiritual divine letter of the gospel? Can it kill, or give death? Yes, it kills, when it is rested in; when it is taken for divine power, and supposed to have goodness in itself; for then it kills the Spirit of God in man, quenches his holy fire within us, and is set up instead of it. It gives death, when it is built into systems of strife and contention about words, notions, and opinions, and makes the kingdom of God to consist, not in power, but in words. When it is thus used, then of necessity it kills, because it keeps from that which alone is life and can give life. This then is the whole of the matter; all the literal truths, and variety of doctrines and expressions of the written word, have but one nature, one end, and one errand, they all say nothing else to man but that one thing which Christ said, in these words, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you"; just the same, as when it is said, "Jesus Christ, who is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification"; this is the only refreshment from Christ. Again, "But ye are washed, but ye are cleansed in the Name of our Lord Jesus"; just the same as when it is said, "Except ye abide in me, and I in you, ye have no life in you." Again, "By grace ye are saved, by faith ye are saved," says neither more nor less than this, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life"; the same as when Christ says, "Without me ye can do nothing"; the same as the apostle says, "Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me"; the same as "Christ in us the hope of glory; if Christ be not in you, ye are reprobates."

Therefore to come to Christ, to have our heavy laden, fallen nature refreshed by him, to be born spirit of his Spirit, to have his heavenly flesh and heavenly blood made living in us, before we put off the bestial body and blood of death which we have from Adam, is the one only thing taught and meant by all that is so variously said in the scriptures of the merits and benefits of Christ to us. It is the SPIRIT, the BODY, the BLOOD of Christ within us that is our whole peace with God, our whole adoption, our whole redemption, our whole justification, our whole glorification; and this is the one thing said, and meant by that new birth, of which Christ says, "Except a man be born again from above, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now, the true ground why all that is said of Christ in such a variety of expressions has only one meaning, and points only to one and the same thing is this, it is because the whole state and nature of fallen man wants only one thing, and that one thing is a real birth of the divine nature made living again in him, as at the first; and then all is done, that can be done, by all the mysteries of the birth, and whole process of Christ, for our salvation. All the Law, the prophets, and the gospel are fulfilled, when there is in Christ a new creature, having life in and from

him, as really as the branch has its life in and from the vine. And when all scripture is thus understood, and all that either Christ says of himself, or his apostles say of him, are all heard, or read, only as one and the same call to come to Christ, in hunger and thirst to be filled and blessed with his divine nature made living within us; then, and then only, the letter kills not, but as a sure guide leads directly to life. But grammar, logic, and criticism knowing nothing of scripture but its words, bring forth nothing but their own wisdom of words, and a religion of wrangle, hatred, and contention, about the meaning of them.

But lamentable as this is, the letter of scripture has been so long the usurped province of school-critics, and learned reasoners making their markets of it, that the difference between literal, notional, and living divine knowledge, is almost quite lost in the Christian world. So that if any awakened souls are here or there found among Christians, who think that more must be known of God, of Christ, and the powers of the world to come, than every scholar can know by reading the letter of scripture, immediately the cry of enthusiasm, whether they be priests, or people, is sent after them. A procedure, which could only have some excuse, if these critics could first prove, that the apostle's text ought to be thus read, "The spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life."

The true nature, and full distinction between literal and divine knowledge, is set forth in the highest degree of clearness in these words of our savior, "The kingdom of God is like a treasure in a field": thus far is the true use and benefit, and utmost power of the letter, it can tell us of a treasure that we want, a treasure that belongs to us, and how and where it is to be found; but when it is added, that a "man goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field," then begins the divine knowledge, which is nothing else, but the treasure possessed and enjoyed. Now what is here said, is the same that is said in these other words of Christ, "Except a man denies himself and forsakes all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"; that is, he cannot partake of my mind, my Spirit, and my nature, and therefore cannot know me; he is only a hearer of a treasure, without entering into the possession and enjoyment of it. And thus it is with all scripture, the letter can only direct to the doing of that which it cannot do, and give notice of something that it cannot give.

Now clear and evident as this distinction is, between a mere literal direction to a thing and a real participation of it, which alone is a true perception of it, the generality of Christians seem quite insensible of any other religious perception, or knowledge of divine things, but such ideas or notions

of them, as a man can form from scripture words. Whereas good and evil, the only objects of religious knowledge, are an inward state and growth of our life, they are in us, are a part of us, just in the same manner as seeing and hearing are in us, and we can have no real knowledge of them any other way, than as we have of our own seeing and hearing. And as no man can get or lose his seeing or hearing, or have less or more of them, by any ideas or notions that he forms about them, just so it is with that which is the power of good, and the power of evil in us; notions and ideas have no effect upon it. Yet no other knowledge is thought of, or sought after, or esteemed of any value, but that which is notional and the work of the brain.

Thus, as soon as a man of speculation can demonstrate that, which he calls the being and attributes of God, he thinks, and others think, that he truly knows God. But what excuse can be made for such an imagination, when plain scripture has told him, that to know God is eternal life, that is, to know God is to have the power, the life, and the Spirit of God manifested in him, and therefore it is eternal life. “No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him.” Because the revelation of the Son is the birth of the Son in the soul, and this new creature in Christ has alone knowledge of God, what he is, and does, and works in the creature.

Again, another, forming an opinion of faith from the letter of scripture, straightway imagines that he knows what faith is, and that he is in the faith.

Sad delusion! For to know what faith is, or that we are in the faith, is to know that Christ is in us of a truth; it is to know the power of his life, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection and ascension, made good in our souls. To be in the faith, is to have done with all notions and opinions about it, because it is found and felt by its living power and fruits within us, which are righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. All which are three names or powers peculiar to Jesus Christ; he alone is our righteousness, our peace, our joy in the Holy Ghost. And therefore faith is not in us, by reason of this or that opinion, assent or consent, but it is Christ, or the divine nature in us; or its operations could not be righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. “By faith ye are save,” has no other meaning than by Christ ye are saved. And if faith in its whole nature, in its root and growth, was anything else but Christ, or a birth of the divine nature within us, it could do us no good, no power could be ascribed to it, it could not be our victory, it could not overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Every faith that is not Christ in us is but a dead faith.

How trifling therefore (to say no worse of it) is that learning, which sets up a difference between faith and its works, between a justification by faith, and justification by its works. Is there any difference between Christ, as a redeemer, and his redeeming works? Can they be set above one another in their redeeming efficacy? If not, then faith and its works, which are nothing else but Christ in us, can have no separation from, or excellency above one another, but are as strictly one, as Christ is one, and no more two things, than our savior and our salvation are two different things in us. Everything that is said of faith, from Adam to this day, is only so much said of the power, and life of a redeeming Christ, working within us; so that to divide faith from its works is as absurd, as to divide a thing from its self, a circle from its roundness. No salvation would have ever been ascribed to faith, but because it is, in the strictest sense, Christ himself, the power of God, living and working in us. It never would have been said of faith, that every power of the world, the flesh, and the devil, must yield to it, but because it is that very Christ within us, without whom we can do nothing. But if without Christ we can do nothing, and yet all things are possible to our faith, can there be a fuller demonstration that our faith is nothing else but Christ, born, and living within us? Whatever therefore there is of power within us, that tends to salvation, call it by what name you will, either faith, or hope, or prayer, or hunger after the kingdom of God and his righteousness, it is all but one power, and that one power is Christ within us. If therefore faith and its good works are but one and the same Christ living in us, the distinction between a good faith and its good works, and all the contentious volumes that have been written about it, are as mere ignorant jargon, as a distinction made and contended for, between life and its living operations.

When the holy church of Christ, the kingdom of God came among men, was first set up, it was the apostle's boast, that all other wisdom or learning was sunk into nothing. "Where," says he, "is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world? Hath not God made them foolishness?" But now, it is the boast of all churches, that they are full of the wise, the scribes, the disputers of this world, who sit with learned pomp in the apostle's chair, and have the mysteries of the kingdom of God committed to them.

Hence it is, that from a religion of heavenly love, built upon the redeeming life and doctrine of a Son of God dying to save the whole world, division, bitterness, envy, pride, strife, hatred, and persecution, nay every outrage of war and bloodshed, breathe and break forth with more strength in learned Christendom, than ever they did from a religion of pagan idolatry, set up by Satan.

It may perhaps be here said, Must there then be no learning or scholarship, no recondite erudition in the Christian church? Must there be nothing thought of, or got by the gospel, but mere salvation? Must its ministers know nothing, teach nothing, nothing but the full denial of self, poverty of spirit, meekness, and humility, and unwearied patience, a never ceasing love, an absolute renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world, a full dependence upon our heavenly Father; no joy or rejoicing but in the Holy Ghost; no wisdom but that which God gives; no walking but as Christ walked; no reward or glory for their labors of love, but that of being found in Christ, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bones, spirit of his Spirit, and clothed with the wedding-garment when the bridegroom comes, "when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first"?

To this the first answer is, Happy, thrice happy are they, who are only the thus learned preachers of the gospel, who through all their ministry, seek nothing for themselves or others, but to be taught of God; hunger after nothing but the bread of life that came down from heaven, owning no master but Christ, no teacher but his Holy Spirit; as unable to join with the diggers in pagan pits of learning, as with those that "labor for the wind, and give their money for that which is not bread."

Secondly, with regard to the demand of learned knowledge in the Christian church, it may be answered, that all that has been said above, is only for the increase and promotion of it, and that all ignorance and darkness may be driven quite out of it. The church of Christ is the seat or school of all the highest knowledge that the human nature is capable of in this life.

Ignorance is everywhere but in the church of Christ. The Law, the prophets, and the gospel, are the only treasures of all that can be called the knowledge either of God or man; and he in whom the Law, the prophets, and the gospel are fulfilled, is the only well-educated man, and one of the first-rate scholars in the world. But now, who is he, that has this wisdom from these rich treasures? Who is he, in whom all is known and fulfilled which they teach? The lip of truth has told us, that it is he, and he alone, "who loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself." This is the man that is all wisdom, all light, and let into full possession of all that is meant by all the mysteries contained in the Law, the prophets, and the gospel. Where this divine love is wanting, and a diabolical self sits in its place, there may be great wits, shining critics, orators, poets, etc., as easily as there may be a profound Machiavel, a learned Hobbs, or an

atheistical Virtuoso. But would you divinely know the mysteries of nature, the ground and reason of good and evil in this world, the relation and connection between the visible and invisible world, how the things of time proceed from, are influenced by, and depend upon the things and powers of eternity, there is but one only key of entrance; nothing can open the vision, but seeing with the eyes of that same love, which begun and carries on all that is, and works in visible and invisible nature. Would you divinely know the mysteries of grace and salvation, would you go forth as a faithful witness of gospel truths, stay till this fire of divine love has had its perfect work in you. For till your heart is an altar, on which this heavenly fire never goes out, you are dead in yourself, and can only be a speaker of dead words, about things that never had any life within you. For without a real birth of this divine love in the essence of your soul, be as learned and polite as you will, your heart is but the dark heart of fallen Adam, and your knowledge of the kingdom of God will be only like that which murdering Cain had. For everything is murder, but that which love does. If love is not the breath of your life, the spirit that forms and governs everything that proceeds from you, everything that has your labor, your allowance and consent, you are broken off from the works of God, you have felt his creation, you are without God, and your name, and nature, and works, can have no other name, or nature, but that which is called pride, wrath, envy, hypocrisy, hatred, revenge, and self-exaltation, under the power of Satan in his kingdom of darkness. Nothing can possibly save you from being the certain prey of all these evil spirits, through the whole course of your life, but a birth of that love which is God himself, his light, and Spirit within you.

There is no knowledge in heaven, but what proceeds from this birth of love, nor is there any difference between the highest light of an angel, and the horrid darkness of a devil, but that which love has made. But now, since divine love can have no beginning, but from a birth of the divine nature in us, therefore says St. John, we love him because he FIRST loved us, the same as saying, we desire God, because he first desired us; for we could not desire God, but because he first desired us, we could not turn to God, but because he first turned to us. And so it is, that we could not love God, but because he first loved us, that is, because he first by our creation brought forth, and by our redemption continued and kept up that same birth of his own Spirit of love in us. For as his Holy Spirit must first be a gift to us, or born in us, and then we have that which can worship God in spirit, so his love must of all necessity be a gift to us, or born in us, and then we have that of God in us which alone can love him with his own love. A truth absolutely asserted in these words; "Love is of God, and he that loveth, is born of God."

Let this be my excuse to the learned world, for owning no school of wisdom, but where the one only lesson is divine love; and the one only teacher the Spirit of God. Let no one call this wild or extravagant; it is no wilder a step, no more injurious to man, to truth and goodness, than the owning no God but one. For to be called from everything but divine love and the Spirit of God, is only being called from everything that has the curse of fallen nature in it. And no man can come from under this curse, till he is born again of divine love and the Spirit of God. For thus to be born, is as much the one sole happiness, joy, and glory of men, both now and ever, as it is the sole joy and glory of angels eternally in the heavens. Believe me then, thou great scholar, that all that thou hast got of wisdom or learning, day after day, in any other school but this, will stand thee in as much stead, fill thee with as high heavenly comfort at the hour of death, as all the long dreams, which night after night, thou hast ever had in thy sleep. And till a man knows this, with as much fullness of conviction as he knows the vanity of a dream, he has his full proof, that he is not yet in the light of truth, not yet taught of God, nor like-minded with Christ.

One of Christ's followers said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father"; the answer was, "Let the dead bury their dead, follow thou me."

Another said to him, "Let me first go bid them farewell, that are at home in my house"; Jesus answered, "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Now let it be supposed that a third had said, Lord, I have left several deep-learned books at home, written by the greatest masters of grammar, logic and eloquence, suffer me first to go back for them, lest losing the light which I had from them, I might mistake the depth and truth of thy heavenly doctrines, or be less able to prove and teach them powerfully to others. Would not such a request as this have had a folly and absurdity in it, not chargeable upon those two other requests which Christ rejected? And yet, what can scholastic, classic, and critical divinity say for itself, but that very same thing, which this requester here said?

The holy Jesus said, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness." Here spiritual light and darkness are as immutably fixed, and separated from one another, as the light and darkness of this world were divided on the first day of the creation. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the one only light both of men and angels. Fallen nature, the selfish will, proud tempers, the highest abilities, the natural sagacity, cunning arts and subtleties, that are or can be in

fallen men and angels, are nothing else but their fullness of spiritual darkness, from which nothing but works of darkness can come forth. In a word, darkness is the whole natural man; light is the new born man from above. Therefore says the Christ of God, "I am the light of the world," because he alone is the birth of heaven in the fallen souls of men. But now, who can more reject this divine light, or more plainly choose darkness instead of it, than he who seeks to have his mind enriched, the faculties of his fallen soul cultivated by the literature of poets, orators, philosophers, sophists, skeptics, and critics, born and bred up in the worship and praises of idol gods and goddesses?

What is this, but like going to the serpent to be taught the innocent spirit of the dove; or to the elegant lusts of Anacreon and Ovid, to learn purity of heart, and kindle the flame of heavenly love in our souls? Look where you will, this is the wisdom of those who seek to pagans for skill to work in Christ's vineyard who from long labors in restoring the grammar, and finding out hidden beauties of some old vicious book, set up for qualified artists to polish the gospel pearl of great price. Surely this is no better a proof of their savoring the things that are of God, than Peter gave, when his master said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan." A grave ecclesiastic, bringing forth out of his closet skillful meditations on the commentaries of Homer, or the astonishing beauties of a modern Dunciad, has as much reason to think that he is walking in the light of Christ, and led by the Spirit of God, as they have who are only eating and drinking, and rising up to play.

But to see the exceeding folly of expecting ability in divine knowledge, from anything that is the wit, wisdom, or spirit of the natural man, you need only read these words of the holy messenger of God, the Elias that was to come. "I indeed," says he, "baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Now if this which the Baptist said of Christ is not our faith, if we do not receive it as the truth in which we are firmly to stand, then, be as learned as we will, we have no better a faith, or higher wisdom, than those blind rabbis who received not the testimony of John. A fire and Spirit from above was the news which he published to the world; this, and nothing else, was his kingdom of God that was at hand. Now if this fire and Spirit from above has not baptized us into a birth of the life of God in our souls, we have not found that Christ and kingdom of God, to which John bore witness. But if (what is still worse)l we are so bewitched through the sorcery of learning, as to turn writers and preachers against this inward, and only redeeming heavenly fire and Spirit, we are baptized with the spirit of those, to whom our Lord said, "Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees,

hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

For what is, or can be the fall of a divine Adam under the power of sin, Satan, and hell, but the extinction of that heavenly fire and Spirit, which was his first union with God and all heavenly beings. Say now, that he had not this heavenly fire and Spirit at the first, that nothing lived or breathed in him but that astral fire and spirit which is the life and spirit of all earthly animals, and then you have a religion as divine as that of the old Sadducees, who allowed of no resurrection, angel, or spirit. For, deny the truth and fullness of a divine life in the first man, and then his fall and redemption are equally empty sounds about nothing. For what can he be fallen from, or redeemed to, if he has now all that fire and spirit of life which he ever had, or ought to have, and if all that is more than this, is but the fiction and dream of a distempered brain? Tell me, why that burning and shining light, that man that was more than a prophet, should come with his water, and the Son of God, God of God, should come with his fire-baptism, if man neither wanted, nor could receive a higher water, and fire of life, than that which he has in common with the beasts of the field?

Why is there all this stir about religions, expiations and atonements, why all these priestly ordinations, consecrations, churches, sacraments, and prayers? For if the fire and spirit of this world is the one life, and highest life, both of man and beasts, we have it unasked for, and on the same terms as the beasts have it, and can only lose it, as they do when they lose their existence.

But if fire and Spirit from heaven can alone make heavenly creatures, and us, to be children of an heavenly Father; if the Son of God took our fallen nature upon him, that the first heavenly fire and Spirit might again come to life in us, if divine life, divine light, and divine goodness, can only come from them, and only in such degree, as they are kindled in our souls, what a poverty of sense is it in those, who are called to a resurrection of the first divine life, where a new creature is taught by that same unction from above whence all the angels and principalities of heaven have their light and glory, what a poverty of sense, I say, in such, to set themselves down at the feet of a Master Tully, and a Master Aristotle, who only differ from the meanest of all other corrupt men, as the teaching serpent differed from his fellow animals, by being more subtle than all the beasts of the field.

Behold then your state, ye ministers, that wait at Christian altars, who will have neither faith, nor hope, nor desire of heavenly fire kindled in your souls, you have a priesthood, and an altar not fit to be named with that, which in Jewish days had a holy fire from God descending upon it, which made priest and sacrifice acceptable to God, though only type and pledge of that inward celestial fire, which Christ would kindle into a never ceasing burning, in the living temples of his new born children from above.

Complain then no more of atheists, infidels, and such like open enemies to the gospel kingdom of God; for whilst you call heavenly fire and Spirit, kindled into the same essential life in us as they are in holy angels, downright frenzy, and mystic madness, you do all that infidel work within the church, which they do on the outside of it. And if through a learned fear of having that done to your earthly reason, which was done to Enoch when God took him, you will own no higher a regeneration, no more birth of God in your souls, than can be had by a few cold drops of water sprinkled on the face, any of the heathen gods of wood and stone are good enough for such an elementary priesthood. For let this be told you, as a truth from God, that till heavenly fire and Spirit have a fullness of a birth within you, you can rise no higher by your highest learning, than to be elegant orators about scripture words.

Our Lord has said, "The kingdom of God is within you," that is, the heavenly fire and Spirit, which are the true kingdom and manifestation of God, are within you. And indeed, where can it be else? Yet what learned pains are taken to remove the literal meaning from these words, as too visionary a thing for learned ears. And yet it is a truth obvious to common sense, that even this outward world of stars and elements, neither does, nor can belong to us, or we to it, but so far as it is, literally speaking, a kingdom within us. For the outward kingdom or powers of this world signify nothing to a worldly man that is dead; but no man is dead, but because the kingdom of this world, with all its powers of fire, light, and spirit, stands only outwardly about him, but has lost its life and powers within him.

Say now, out of reverence to sound literature, and abhorrence of enthusiasm, that the kingdom of God is not really and virtually within, that its heavenly fire, light, and Spirit, are not, ought not to be born in a sober right-minded follower of Christ, and then you have a good disciple of Christ, as absolutely dead to the kingdom of heaven, as the corpse that has nothing of the fire, spirit, and light of this world in it, is dead to all the outward world round about it.

What a sobriety of faith and sound doctrine is it, to preach up a necessity of being living members of the kingdom of heaven, and at the same time the necessity of orthodoxly holding, that a heavenly birth neither is, nor can, nor ought to be within us! For if it either is, or could, or ought to be within us, then it could not be a brain-sick folly to believe, that the literal words of Christ had no deceit, falsity, or delusion in them, when he said, "Except a man be born again from above, he cannot see, or enter into the kingdom of God." That is, he cannot possibly have any godlike or divine goodness, he cannot be a child of a heavenly Father, but from the nature and Spirit of his heavenly Father, but from the nature and Spirit of his heavenly Father brought to a real birth of life in him. Now if, without this divine birth, all that we have in us is but fallen Adam, a birth of sin, the flesh, and the devil, if the power of this heavenly birth is all the power of goodness that is or was, or ever can be in a son of Adam; and if logic, learning, and criticism, are almost everywhere set in high places, to pronounce and prove it to be mere enthusiasm and spiritual frenzy, what wonder is it, if folly of doctrine, wickedness of life, lusts of the flesh, profaneness of spirit, wantonness of wit, contempt of goodness and profession of Christianity, should all of them seem to have their full establishment among us?

What wonder, if sacraments, church-prayers, and preachings, leave high and low, learned and unlearned, men and women, priests and people, as unaltered in all their aged vices, as they leave children unchanged in their childish follies? For where the one only fountain of life and goodness is forsaken, where the seed of the divine birth is not alive, and going forwards in the birth, all the difference between man and man is as nothing with respect to the kingdom of God. It matters not what name is given to the old earthly man of Adam's bestial flesh and blood, whether he be called a zealous churchman, a stiff-necked Jew, a polite civilized heathen, or a grave infidel; under all these names, the unregenerate old man has but one and the same nature, without any other difference, but that which time, and place, education, complexion, hypocrisy, and worldly wisdom, happen to make in him. By such a one, whether he be papist, or Protestant, the gospel is only kept as a book, and all that is within it is only so much condemnation to the keeper, just as the old man, a Jew, has kept the book of the Law and the prophets, only to be more fully condemned by them.

That the Jewish and Christian church stand at this day in the same kind of apostasy, or fallen state, must be manifest to everyone, that will not shut his eyes against it. Why are the Jews in a fallen state? It is because they have refused him, who in his whole process was the truth, the substance,

the life, and fulfilling of all that which was outwardly taught, and prescribed in their Law and prophets.

But is it not as easy to see, that the whole Christian church are in a fallen state, and for the same reason, because they are fallen or turned away from that Holy Spirit who was promised, and given to be the one only power, life, and fulfilling of all that which was outwardly taught, and prescribed by the gospel. For the Holy Spirit to come was just the same ALL, and FULFILLING of the whole gospel, as a Christ to come was the all, and the fulfilling of the Law. The Jew therefore with his Old Testament, not owning Christ in all his process to be the truth and life, and fulfiller of their Law, is just in that same apostasy, as the Christian with his New Testament, not owning the Holy Spirit in all his operations, to be his only light, guide, and governor. For as all types and figures in the Law were but empty shadows without Christ's being the life and power of them, so all that is written in the gospel is but dead letter, unless the Holy Spirit in man be the living reader, the living rememberer, and the living doer of them.

Therefore, where the Holy Spirit is not thus owned and received, as the whole power and life of the gospel state, it is no marvel, that Christians have no more of gospel virtues, than the Jews have of patriarchal holiness, or that the same lusts and vices which prosper amongst Jews, should break forth with as much strength in fallen Christendom. For the New Testament not ending in the coming of the Holy Spirit, with fullness of power over sin and hell, and the devil, is but the same, and no better a help to heaven, than the Old Testament without the coming of a messiah. Need I now say any more, to demonstrate the truth of that which I first said was the one thing absolutely essential, and only available to man's salvation, namely, the SPIRIT of God brought again to his FIRST POWER OF LIFE IN US.

This was the glory of man's creation, and this alone can be the glory of his redemption. All besides this, that passes for a time betwixt God and man, be it what it will, shows only our fall and distance from God, and in its best state has only the nature of a good road, which is only good, because that which we want is at the end of it. Whilst God calls us by various outward dispensations, by creaturely things, figurative institutions, etc., it is a full proof, that we are not yet in our true state, or that union with God which is intended by our redemption.

God said to Moses, "Put off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Now this which God said to Moses, is only that very same thing, which circumcision, the Law, sacrifices, and sacraments, say to man.

They are in themselves nothing else but outward significations of inward impurity, and lost holiness, and can do no more in themselves but intimate, point, and direct to an inward life and new birth from above, that is to be sought after.

But here lies the great mistake, or rather idolatrous abuse of all God's outward dispensations. They are taken for the thing itself, for the truth and essence of religion. That which the learned Jews did with the outward letter of their Law, that same do learned Christians with the outward letter of their gospel. Why did the Jewish church so furiously and obstinately cry out against Christ, Let him be crucified? It was because their letter-learned ears, their worldly spirit and temple-orthodoxy, would not bear to hear of an inward savior, not bear to hear of being born again of his Spirit, of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, of his dwelling in them, and they in him. To have their Law of ordinances, their temple-pomp sunk into such a fulfilling savior as this, was such enthusiastic jargon to their ears, as forced their sober, rational theology, to call Christ, Beelzebub, his doctrine, blasphemy, and all for the sake of Moses and rabbinic orthodoxy.

Need it now be asked, whether the true Christ of the gospel be less blasphemed, less crucified, by that Christian theology which rejects an inward Christ, a savior living and working in the soul, as its inward light and life, generating his own nature and Spirit in it, as its only redemption, whether that which rejects all this as mystic madness be not that very same old Jewish wisdom sprung up in Christian theology, which said of Christ when teaching these very things, "He is mad, why hear ye him?" Our blessed Lord in a parable sets forth the blind Jews, as saying of himself, "We will not have this man to reign OVER us." The sober-minded Christian scholar has none of this Jewish blindness, he only says of Christ, we will not have this man to REIGN IN US, and so keeps clear of such mystic absurdity as St. Paul fell into, when he enthusiastically said, "Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me."

Christian doctors reproach the old learned rabbis, for their vain faith, and carnal desire of a glorious, temporal, outward Christ, who should set up their temple-worship all over the world. Vanity indeed, and learned blindness enough?

But nevertheless, in these condemners of rabbinic blindness, St. Paul's words are remarkably verified, viz., "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest dost the same thing." For, take away all that from Christ which Christian doctors call enthusiasm, suppose him not to be an inward birth, a new life and Spirit within us, but only an outward, separate, distant heavenly prince, no more really in us, than our high cathedrals are in the third heavens, but only by an invisible hand from his throne on high, some way or other raising and helping great scholars, or great temporal powers, to make a rock in every nation for his church to stand upon; suppose all this (which is the very marrow of modern divinity) and then you have that very outward Christ, and that very outward kingdom, which the carnal Jew dreamed of, and for the sake of which the spiritual Christ was then nailed to the cross, and is still crucified by the new risen Jew in the Christian church. If it now be asked, whence, or from what, comes all this spiritual blindness, which from age to age thus mistakes and defeats all the gracious designs of God towards fallen mankind? Look at the origin of the first sin, and you see it all. Had Eve desired no knowledge but what came from God, paradise had been the habitation of her and all her offspring. If after paradise lost, Jews and Christians had desired no knowledge but what came from God, the Law and prophets had kept the Jew close to the first tree of life, and the Christian church had been a kingdom of God, and communion of saints to this day.

But now corruption, sin, death, and every evil of the world, have entered into the church, the spouse of Christ, just as they entered into Eve, the spouse of Adam in paradise, in the same way, and from the same cause, viz., a desire of more, or other knowledge, than that which comes from God alone. This desire is the serpent's voice within every man, which does all that to him, and in him, which the serpent at the tree did to Eve. It carries on the first deceit, it shows and recommends to him that same beautiful tree of own will, own wit, and own wisdom, springing up within him, which Eve saw in the garden; and yet so blind is this love of wisdom as not to see, that his eating of it is in the strictest truth his eating of the same forbidden fruits as Eve did, and keeping up in himself all that death and separation from God, which the first knowledge-hunger brought forth.

Let then the eager searcher into words for wisdom, the book-devourer, the opinion-broker, the exalter of human reason, and every projecting builder of religious systems, be told this, that the thirst and pride of being learnedly wise in the things of God, is keeping up the grossest ignorance of them, and is nothing else but Eve's old serpent, and Eve's evil birth within them, and does no better work in the

church of Christ, than her thirst after wisdom did in the paradise of God. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, is the one only way by which any man ever did, or ever can attain divine knowledge, and divine goodness. To knock at any other door but this, is but like asking life of that which is itself dead, or praying to him for bread who has nothing but stones to give.

Now strange as all this may seem to the labor-learned possessor of far-fetched book-riches, yet it is saying no more, nor anything else, but that which Christ said in these words, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." For, if classic gospellers, linguist critics, scripture-logicians, salvation orators, able dealers in the grammatic powers of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman phrases, idioms, tropes, figures, etc., etc., can show, that by raising themselves high in these attainments, they are the very men that are sunk down from themselves into Christ's little children of the kingdom of God, then it may be also said, that he who is laboring, scheming, and fighting for all the riches he can get from both the Indies, is the very man that has left all to follow Christ, the very man that "labors not for the meat that perishes."

Show me a man whose heart has no desire, or prayer in it, but to love God with his whole soul and spirit, and his neighbor as himself, and then you have shown me the man who knows Christ, and is known of him; the best and wisest man in the world, in whom the first paradisaical wisdom and goodness are come to life. Not a single precept in the gospel, but is the precept of his own heart, and the joy of that new-born heavenly love which is the life and light of his soul. In this man, all that came from the old serpent is trod under his feet, not a spark of self, of pride, of wrath, of envy, of covetousness, or worldly wisdom, can have the least abode in him, because that love, which fulfilleth the whole Law and the prophets, that love which is God and Christ, both in angels and men, is the love that gives birth, and life, and growth to everything that is either thought, or word, or action in him. And if he has no share or part with foolish errors, cannot be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, it is because, to be always governed by this love, is the same thing as to be always taught of God.

On the other hand, show me a scholar as full of learning, as the Vatican is of books, and he will be just as likely to give all that he has for the gospel-pearl, as he would be, if he was as rich as Croesus. Let no one here imagine, that I am writing against all human literature, arts and sciences, or that I wish the world to be without them. I am no more an enemy to them, than to the common useful

labors of life. It is literal learning, verbal contention, and critical strife about the things of God, that I charge with folly and mischief to religion. And in this, I have all learned Christendom, both popish and Protestant on my side. For they both agree in charging each other with a bad and false gospel-state, because of that which their learning, logic, and criticism do for them. Say not then, that it is only the illiterate enthusiast that condemns human learning in the gospel kingdom of God. For when he condemns the blindness and mischief of popish logic and criticism, he has all the learned Protestant world with him; and when he lays the same charge to Protestant learning, he has a much larger kingdom of popish great scholars, logically and learnedly affirming the same thing.

So that the private person, charging human learning with so much mischief to the church, is so far from being led by enthusiasm, that he is led by all the church-learning that is in the world.

Again, all learned Christendom agrees in the same charge against temporal power in the church, as hurtful to the very being and progress of a salvation-kingdom that is not of this world, as supporting doctrines that human learning has brought into it. And true it is and must be, that human power can only support and help forward human things. The Protestant brings proof from a thousand years' learning and doctrines, that the pope is an unjust usurper of temporal power in the church, which is Christ's spiritual spouse. The papist brings the learning of as many ages to show that a temporal head of the church is an anti-Christian usurpation. And yet (N.B.) he who holds Christ to be the one, only head, heart, and life of the church, and that no man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, passes with the learned of both these people for a brain-sick enthusiast. Is it not then high time to look out for some better ground to stand upon, than such learning as this? Now look where you will, through all the whole nature of things, no divine wisdom, knowledge, goodness, and deliverance from sin, are anywhere to be found for fallen man, but in these two points; (1) a total entire entrance into the whole process of Christ; (2) a total resignation to, and sole dependence upon the continual operation of the Holy Ghost, or Christ come again in the Spirit, to be our never-ceasing light, teacher, and guide into all those ways of virtue, in which he himself walked in the flesh. All besides this, call it by what name you will, is but dead work, a vain labor of the old man, to new create himself. And here let it be well observed, that in these two points consists the whole of that mystic divinity, to which a Jewish orthodoxy at this day is so great an enemy. For nothing else is meant, or taught by it, but a total dying to self (called the process or cross of Christ) that a new

creature (called Christ in us, or Christ come in the Spirit) may be begotten in the purity, and perfection of the first man's union with God. Now, let the Christian world forget, or depart from this one mystic way of salvation, let anything else be thought of or trusted to but the cross of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, and then, though churches, and preachers, and prayers, and sacraments are everywhere in plenty, yet nothing better can come of it than a Christian kingdom of pagan vices, along with a mouth-belief of an holy catholic church, and communion of saints. To this melancholy truth, all Christendom both at home and abroad bears full witness. Who need be told, that there is not a corruption or depravity of human nature, no kinds of pride, wrath, envy, malice, and self-love; no sorts of hypocrisy, falseness, cursing, swearing, perjury, and cheating; no wantonness of lust in every kind of debauchery, but are as common all over Christendom, as towns and villages? But to pass these by, I shall only instance in two or three particulars, which though little observed, and less condemned, yet fully show that the beast, the whore, and the fiery dragon, are in possession of Protestant as well as popish churches.

And first, can it be said that Mammon is less served by Christians, than by Jews and infidels? Or can there be a fuller proof that Christians, Jews, and infidels, are equally fallen from God and all divine worship, since truth itself has told us, that we cannot serve God and Mammon? Is not this as unalterable a truth, and of as great moment, as if it had been said, Ye cannot serve God and Baal? Or can it with any truth or sense be affirmed, that the Mammonist has more of Christ in him than the Baalist, or is more or less an idolator for being called a Christian, a Jew, or an infidel? Look now at all those particulars which Christ charged upon the Jewish priests, scribes, and Pharisees, and you will see them all acted over again in the fallen state of Christendom. And if God's prophets were again in the world, they would have just the same complaints against the fallen Christian church, as they had against the old carnal stiff-necked Jews, namely, "that of their silver and gold they had made themselves idols," Hosea 8:4. For though figured idol-gods of gold are not now worshipped either by Jews or Christians, yet silver and gold with that which belongs to them is the Mammon God, that sits and reigns in their hearts. How else could there be that universal strife through all Christendom, who should stand in the richest and highest place, to preach up the humility of Christ, and offer spiritual sacrifices unto God? What God but Mammon could put into the hearts of Christ's ambassadors, to make, or want to make a gain of that gospel, which from the beginning to the end means nothing else but death to self, and separation from every view, temper, and affection, that has any connection with the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

life? Our blessed Lord said a word to the Jews, that might well have made their ears to tingle, when he told them that they "had made his Father's house a den of thieves"; because sheep and oxen were sold, and money-changers sitting in the outer court of the temple. Now if you will say, that Mammon has brought forth no profanation like this in our Christian church, your best proof must be this, because our church-sale, is not oxen and sheep, but holy things, cures of souls, parsonages, vicarages, etc., and our money-changers, our buyers, and sellers, are chiefly consecrated persons.

Look at things spiritual, and things temporal, and say if you can, that the same arts, the same passions, and worldly wisdom, are not as visibly active in the one, as in the other. For if Christ at leaving the world had said to his disciples, "Labor to be rich; Make full provision for the flesh; Be conformed to the world; Court the favor and interest of great men. Clothe yourselves with all the worldly honors, distinctions, and powers you can get"; I appeal to every man, whether popish and Protestant churches need do anything else, than that which they now do, and have done for ages, to prove their faithfulness to such a master, and their full obedience to his precepts. And now, what is all this in truth and reality, but the same whore riding upon the same beast, not here or there, but through all fallen Christendom, where God has only, in every age, people, and language, his seven thousands, who have not bowed the knee to Mammon?

Again, secondly, "Ye have heard," says our Lord, "that it hath been said by them of old; thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." The Jews practiced promissory oaths, and thought all was well, when there was a performance of them. But this, with numbers of other Jewish practices, was not to be allowed in this kingdom of God, that was then come into the world. Christ totally rejects, and absolutely forbids it, saying, "I say unto you, swear not at all." But instead of it, he appoints and absolutely demands a most perfect simplicity of language, to support and adorn the mutual communication of those, whom he had created again unto righteousness, and given power to become sons of God saying, "Let your communication be YEA, YEA, and NAY, NAY, for (N.B.) whatsoever is more than this, cometh of evil." What more could have been done by Christ to prevent the use, or hinder the entrance of an oath into his church? What then shall we say of the present universal Christendom? For if Christ had commanded the direct contrary, had he said, "Behold I give you this new commandment, let not a simple YEA and NAY be of any avail in all your communication but let oaths be required of all that bear my name, as a proof that they belong to me, and act in all their dealings as become saints; for whatsoever is less than this, cometh of evil."

Had this been Christ's new commandment, all the churches of Christendom, as well popish as Protestant, and these reformed kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, might have much to boast of their obedience to it. For through town and country, in all ignorant villages, in all learned colleges, in all courts spiritual and temporal, what with law-oaths, simony-oaths, bribery-oaths, election-oaths, etc., etc., etc., there is more swearing and forswearing, than all history reports of any idol-worshipping nations. It was said of old, "Because of swearing, the land mourneth"; it is full as true to say now, Because of swearing, the land rejoiceth in iniquity, is full of profaneness, and without any fear or awe of the divine majesty, daily swallowing down all manner of oaths, in the same good state of mind, and with as much serious reflection, as pot -companions swallow down their liquor. "He that despiseth me," says Christ, "despiseth not me, but him that sent me." Can that church, which absolutely requires that which Christ has absolutely forbidden, be free from the most open and public despising of Christ, which in full contrariety to his express word, refuses the sufficiency of that yea and nay, which he has commanded to be sufficient; and what is still more wonderful, compels all orders of Christians to swear by that very book, which says to all, whether high or low, prince, priest, or people, SWEAR NOT AT ALL?

If the swearing law was to order, that instead of kissing the gospel-book, the swearer should say, "In remembrance of, and in regard to the words of Christ, forbidding me to swear, I make this oath," who would not see the open contempt of Christ and his gospel? But the contempt of both is as truly there, when the gospel-book is kissed by the swearer; for the book has nothing relating to oaths, but those words of Christ, which absolutely forbid the use of them. Instead, therefore, of a SO HELP ME GOD and his HOLY GOSPEL, it might have been much better, if every swearing law through all Christendom had obliged every swearer to finish his oath with these words, Let God and his holy gospel PARDON ME IN THIS ONE THING.

If it here be asked, whether I would have all private Christians to beggar themselves, and lose all their right and title to house and land, which by the laws of Christendom, cannot be preserved without certain promissory oaths? I say not so. But my answer is, that as the Jews were of old carried captive into Babylon, so as real a captivity, and full as great, must happen to all private Christians, born and living under a fallen state of governing Christendom. For whether it be a pope, or a Nebuchadnezzar, popish, or Protestant church governors, that make the goods and properties of private Christians, only possible to be possessed by obedience to their swearing laws, the captivity

is the same. And as God bore with the want of a Jerusalem-worship in those Jews, whose captivity suffered them not to perform it, so it may well be hoped and believed, that he will bear with that want of gospel purity, in the yea and nay of private Christians, which their captivity under a fallen state of Christian government suffers them not constantly to adhere to. And also, that the piety of private Christians, loving and longing after gospel-purity of communication, under the church-captivity, will be as acceptable to God, as the piety of captive Jews was, who though living under heathen laws, and forced to say their prayers in Babylon, yet had always their eyes turned towards, and their hearts longing after Jerusalem and its holy worship.

What I write, is not to show that Christendom's oaths, and the manner of them, are not to be submitted to by any private good Christian, but to show in the plainest manner, that the laws of Christendom, which make them necessary, are a full proof that the spirit which governs all Christendom, is fallen away from the Spirit of Christ. And also to show, that if gross impiety runs through all the Christian world, if much and much the greatest part of swearing Christians have lost all pious fear of oaths and swearing, it is because the necessity of swearing meets every man, in almost everything, at the peril of losing all that he has, or can have, unless he will swear.

When the matter of an oath is a manifest lie, or an engagement to do some wicked thing, all is to be suffered, rather than take it. But where there is nothing false or bad, affirmed or promised, nor any blame chargeable, but that of going further than our Lord's yea and nay, it is plain from Christ's words, that the evil is only in that, and there, from whence the oath comes.

When a person swears of his own accord, or wantonly, then the oath comes of, or from the evil of his own heart. But when a Christian, in whose heart the simplicity and purity of gospel-language is written and loved, when he submits to use more than a yea or nay, compelled by that authority which makes the refusal to be the loss of goods, and bodily imprisonment, then such departure from gospel-language comes of and from the evil in that power which required it, whether it be a pope, a kirk, a church, an assembly of divines, or a Nebuchadnezzar. All this, I say, is plain from Christ's own words. "Let your yea be yea, and your nay nay." But why so?

It is because whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil, that is, is caused by evil. Therefore the evil that is in the use of an imposed oath, is by the words of Christ, charged upon and confined to that,

which causes or forces it to be done. For that which the oath comes from, is that which our savior calls the evil of it but the oath comes from that which causes it, therefore, that which causes swearing, is by our savior's words charged with all the evil of the oath. But (N.B.) all this supposed freedom from the evil of an imposed oath, in the private Christian's submission to the use of it, is only then and there, where what is affirmed, or denied by the oath, has all that innocence, truth, or righteousness in it, which the true yea or nay of Christ might justly affirm, or deny.

But here let it be well observed, that nothing that has here been said, is intended to blame the piety of those, who on no account whatsoever will be prevailed upon to take any kind of oath, because our Lord and master has said, "Swear not at all." I am so far from blaming this, or looking upon it, as the effect of a false or blind piety, that I wish with all my heart, it may come to be the piety of all the three estates of this kingdom; and that all swearing, whether in secular or religious matters, may by all the authority of the nation be as utterly condemned, as absolutely renounced, and declared to be as anti-Christian, as the pope's supremacy.

In a word, that which calls for, and requires oaths among Christians, requires that which Christ forbids; but governing Christendom everywhere establishes, requires, and even compels Christians to swear, therefore governing Christendom is fallen from Christ, and acts by and through that spirit, which being contrary to Christ, is and must be called ANTICHRIST.

But to proceed now to a third and last instance, which I shall mention, of the full power of anti-Christ in and through every part of governing Christendom.

In the darkest ages of Romish superstition, a martial spirit of zeal and glory for the gospel, broke forth in kings, cardinals, bishops, monks, and friars, to lead the sheep of Christ, saints, pilgrims, penitents, and sinners of all kinds, to proceed in battle array, to kill, devour, and drive the Turks from the land of Palestine, and the old earthly Jerusalem. These bloodthirsty expeditions were called an holy war, because it was fighting for the holy land; they were called also a crusade, because crosses and crucifixes made the greatest glitter among the sharpened instruments of human murder.

Thus under the banner of the cross went forth an army of church wolves, to destroy the lives of those, whom the Lamb of God died on the cross to save.

The light which broke out at the reformation, abhorred the bloody superstitious zeal of these catholic heroes. But (N.B.) what followed from this new risen, reforming light, what came forth instead of these holy crusades? Why wars, if possible, still more diabolical. Christian kingdoms with bloodthirsty piety, destroying, devouring, and burning one another, for the sake of that which was called popery, and that which was called Protestantism.

Now who can help seeing, that Satan, the prince of the powers of darkness, had here a much greater triumph over Christendom, than in all the holy wars and crusades that went before? For all that was then done, by such high-spirited fighters for old Jerusalem's earth, could not be said to be so much done against gospel-light, because not one in a thousand of those holy warriors were allowed to see what was in the gospel. But now, with the gospel opened in everyone's hands, papists and Protestants make open war against every divine virtue that belonged to Christ, or that can unite them with that Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world: I say against every divine, redeeming virtue of the Lamb of God, for these are the enemies which Christian war conquers. For there is not a virtue of gospel-goodness, but has its death-blow from it. For no virtue has any gospel-goodness in it any further, than as it has its birth and growth in and from the Spirit of Christ; where his nature and Spirit is not, there is nothing but the heathen to be found, which is but saying the same truth, as when the apostle said, that he who hath not, or is not led by the Spirit of Christ, is none of his.

Now fancy to yourself Christ, the Lamb of God, after his divine sermon on the mount, putting himself at the head of a blood-thirsty army, or St. Paul going forth with a squadron of fire and brimstone, to make more havoc in human lives than a devouring earthquake.

But if this be too blasphemous an absurdity to be supposed, what follows, but that the Christian who acts in the destroying fury of war, acts in full contrariety to the whole nature and Spirit of Christ, and can no more be said to be led by his Spirit, or be one with him, than those his enemies who "came forth with swords and staves to take him."

Blinded Protestants think they have the glory of slaughtering blind papists; and the victorious papist claims the merit of having conquered the troops of heretics: but alas! the conquest is equally great on both sides, both are entitled to the same victory; and the glorious victory on both sides, is only that of having gospel goodness equally under their feet.

When a Most Christian Majesty, with his catholic church, sings a *Te Deum* at the high altar, for rivers of Protestant blood poured out; or an evangelic church sings praise and glory to the Lamb of God, for helping them from his holy throne in heaven, to make popish towns like to Sodom and Gomorrah, they blaspheme God as much as Cain would have done, had he offered a sacrifice of praise to God for helping him to murder his brother.

Let such worshippers of God be told this, that the field of blood gives all its glory to Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, and will to the end of his reign be the only receiver of all the glory, that can come from it.

A glorious Alexander in the heathen world is a shame and reproach to the human nature, and does more mischief to mankind in a few years, than all the wild beasts, in every wilderness upon earth, have ever done from the beginning of the world to this day. But the same hero, making the same ravage from country to country with Christian soldiers, has more thanks from the devil, than twenty pagan Alexanders would ever have had. To make men kill men, is meat and drink to that roaring adversary of mankind, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. But to make Christians kill Christians for the sake of Christ's church, is his highest triumph over the highest mark, which Christ has set upon those whom he has purchased by his blood. "This commandment," says he, "I give unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another as I have loved you."

Can the duelist, who had rather sheathe his sword in the bowels of his brother, than stifle that which he calls an affront, can he be said to have this mark of his belonging to Christ? and may not he that is called his SECOND, more justly be said to be second to none in the love of human murder? Now, what is the difference between the haughty duelist with his provided second, meeting his adversary with sword and pistol behind a hedge, or a house, and two kingdoms with their high-spirited regiments slaughtering one another in the field of battle? It is the difference that is between the murder of one man, and the murder of an hundred thousand.

Now imagine the duelist fasting and confessing his sins to God today, because he is engaged to fight his brother tomorrow; fancy again the conqueror got into his closet, on his bended knees, lifting up

hands and heart to God for blessing his weapons with the death of his brother; and then you have a picture in little of the great piety, that begins and ends the wars all over heavenly Christendom.

What blindness can well be greater, than to think that a Christian kingdom, as such, can have any other goodness, or union with Christ, but that very goodness, which makes the private Christian to be one with him, and a partaker of the divine nature? Or that pride, wrath, ambition, envy, covetousness, rapine, resentment, revenge, hatred, mischief, and murder, are only the works of the devil, whilst they are committed by private or single men; but when carried on by all the strength and authority, all the hearts, hands, and voices of a whole nation, that the devil is then quite driven out of them, loses all his right and power in them, and they become holy matter of church thanksgivings, and the sacred oratory of pulpits.

Look at that which the private Christian is to do to his neighbor, or his enemy, and you see that very thing, which one Christian kingdom is to do to another. Look at that which proves a man to be not led and governed by the Spirit of Christ, and you see that, which proves a kingdom to be under the dominion and power of Satan. Wherever pride is, there the devil is riding in his first fiery chariot; and wherever wrath is, there he has his first murdering sword at work. What is it, that fallen man wants to be redeemed from, but pride and wrath, envy and covetousness? He can have no higher separation or apostasy from God, no fuller union with Satan and his angels, than he has of the spirit of these tempers: they constitute that, which whether you call it SELF, or Satan in him, the meaning is the same. Now suppose man not fallen into this self or Satan, and then there could be no more war or fighting in him, than there was in the WORD made man in our flesh. Or suppose him redeemed from his fallen nature, by a new birth of the Lamb of God born in his soul, and then he can no more be hired to kill men gloriously in the field, than to carry a dark lantern by night to a powder-plot.

Love, goodness, and communication of good, is the immutable glory and perfection of the divine nature, and nothing can have union with God, but that which partakes of this goodness. The love that brought forth the existence of all things, changes not through the fall of its creatures, but is continually at work, to bring back all fallen nature and creature to their first state of goodness. All that passes for a time between God and his fallen creature, is but one and the same thing, working for one and the same end; and though this is called wrath, that called punishment, curse, and death, it is all from the beginning to the end, nothing but the work of the first creating love, and means

nothing else, does nothing else, but those works of purifying fire, which must, and alone can burn away all that dark evil, which separates the creature from its first created union with God. God's providence, from the fall to the restitution of all things, is doing the same thing, as when he said to the dark chaos of fallen nature, "Let there be light"; he still says, and will continue saying the same thing, till there is no evil of darkness left in all that is nature and creature. God creating, God illuminating, God sanctifying, God threatening and punishing, God forgiving and redeeming, is but one and the same essential, immutable, never ceasing working of the divine nature. That in God which illuminates and glorifies saints and angels in heaven, is that very same working of the divine nature, which wounds, pains, punishes, and purifies sinners upon earth. And (N.B.) every number of destroyed sinners, whether thrown by Noah's flood, or Sodom's brimstone, into the terrible furnace of a life, insensible of anything but new forms of raging misery till judgment's day, must through the all -working, all-redeeming love of God, which never ceases, come at last to know that they had lost, and have found again such a God of love as this.

And if long and long ages of fiery pain, and tormenting darkness, fall to the share of many, or most of God's apostate creatures, they will last no longer, than till the great fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility, and all that is SELF has died in the long agonies and bloody sweat of a lost God, which is that all-saving cross of Christ, which will never give up its redeeming power, till sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God. And if long ages hereafter can only do that for a soul, departing this life under a load of sins, which days and nights might have done for a most hardened pharaoh, or a most wicked Nero, whilst in the body, it is because, whilst the soul is in the body, it has only the nature and state of fallen Adam, but when flesh and blood are taken from it, the strong apostate nature of fallen angels is found in it, which must have its state and place in that blackness of darkness of a fiery wrath, that burns in them and their kingdom.

O poor sinner, whoever thou art, repent and turn to God, whilst thou hast Adam's flesh upon thee; for as long as that lasts, the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; but if thou diest without Adam's repentance, black lakes, bottomless pits, ages of a gnawing worm, and fire that never ceases to burn, will stand between thee and a kingdom of heaven afar off.

To prevent all this, and make thee a child of the first resurrection, Jesus Christ, God and man, the only begotten Son of this infinite love, came into the world in the name, and under the character of infinite pity, boundless compassion, inexpressible meekness, bleeding love, nameless humility, never ending patience, long suffering, and bowels of redeeming mercy, called the Lamb of God, who with all these supernatural virtues taketh away the sins of the world.

Now from this view of God's infinite love and mercy in Christ Jesus, willing nothing, seeking nothing through all the regions of his providence, but that sinners of all kinds, the boldest rebels against all his goodness, may have their proper remedy, their necessary means of being full delivered from all that hurt, mischief, and destruction, which in full opposition to their God and creator, they had brought upon themselves; from this view, I say, of God and Christ, using every miracle of love and wisdom to give recovery of life, health and salvation to all that have rebelled against them, look at the murdering monster of WAR. And what can its name, or nature be, but a fiery great dragon, a full figure of Satan broke loose, and fighting against every redeeming virtue of the Lamb of God?

The temporal miseries and wrongs which war carries along with it, wherever it goes, are neither to be numbered or expressed. What thievery bears any proportion to that, which with the boldness of drum and trumpet plunders the innocent of all that they have? And if themselves are left alive with all their limbs, or their daughters unravished, they have many times only the ashes of their consumed houses to lie down upon. What honor has war not gotten from its tens and tens of hundreds or thousands of men slaughtered on heaps, with as little regret or concern, as at loads of rubbish thrown into a pit? Who, but the fiery dragon, would put wreaths of laurel on such heroes' heads? Who but he could say unto them, "Well done, good and faithful servants"?

But there is still an evil of war much greater, though less regarded. Who reflects, how many hundreds of thousands, nay millions of young men, born into this world for no other end, but that they may be born again of Christ, and from sons of Adam's misery become sons of God, and fellow heirs with Christ in everlasting glory; who reflects, I say, what nameless numbers of these are robbed of God's precious gift of life to them, before they have known the one sole benefit of living; who are not suffered to stay in this world, till age and experience have done their best for them, have helped them to know the inward voice and operation of God's Spirit, helped them to find, and feel that evil, curse, and sting of sin and death, which must be taken from within them, before they can die the death of

the righteous; but instead of all this, have been either violently forced, or tempted in the fire of youth, and full strength of sinful lusts, to forget God, eternity, and their own souls, and rush into a kill or be killed, with as much furious haste, and goodness of spirit, as tiger kills tiger for the sake of his prey?

That God's providence over his fallen creatures is nothing else but a providence of love and salvation, turning through ways of infinite wisdom, sooner or later, all kinds of evil into a new good, making that which was lost to be found, that which was dead to be alive again; not willing that one single sinner should want that which can save him from eternal death, is a truth as certain, as that God's Name is, I AM that I AM.

Among unfallen creatures in heaven, God's Name and nature is LOVE, LIGHT, and GLORY. To the fallen sons of Adam, that which was love, light, and glory in heaven, becomes infinite PITY and COMPASSION on earth, in a God clothed with the nature of his fallen creature, bearing all its infirmities, entering into all its troubles, and in the meek innocence of a Lamb of God living a life, and dying a death, of all the sufferings due to sin. Hence it was, that when this DIVINE PITY suffered its own life-giving blood to be poured on the ground, all outward nature made full declaration of its atoning and redeeming power; the strength of the earth did quake, the hardness of rocks was forced to split and long-covered graves to give up their dead. A certain passage, that all that came by the curse into nature and creature must give up its power; that all kinds of hellish wrath, hardened malice, fiery pride, selfish wills, tormenting envy, and earthly passions, which kept men under the power of Satan, must have their fullness of death, and fullness of a new life, from that all-powerful, all-purifying blood of the Lamb, which will never cease washing RED into WHITE, till the earth is washed into the crystal purity of that glassy sea, which is before the throne of God, and all the sons of Adam clothed in such white, as fits them for their several mansions in their heavenly Father's house.

Sing, O ye heavens, and shout all ye lower parts of the earth, this is OUR GOD that varies not, whose first creating love for (sic) knows no change, but into a redeeming pity towards all his fallen creatures.

Look now at warring Christendom, what smallest drop of pity towards sinners is to be found in it? Or how could a spirit all hellish, more fully contrive and hasten their destruction? It stirs up and kindles

every passion of fallen nature that is contrary to the all-humble, all-meek, all-loving, all-forgiving, all-saving Spirit of Christ. It unites, it drives, and compels nameless numbers of unconverted sinners to fall, murdering and murdered among flashes of fire, with the wrath and swiftness of lightning, into a fire infinitely worse than that in which they died. O sad subject for thanksgiving days, whether in popish or Protestant churches! For if there is a joy of all the angels in heaven for one sinner that repents, what a joy must there be in hell over such multitudes of sinners, not suffered to repent? And if they who have "converted many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in the firmament for ever," what Chorazin's woe may they not justly fear, whose proud wrath and vain glory have robbed such numberless troops of poor wretches, of all time and place of knowing what righteousness they wanted, for the salvation of their immortal souls.

Here my pen trembles in my hand; but when, O when will one single Christian church, people, or language, tremble at the share they have in this death of sinners!

For the GLORY OF HIS MAJESTY'S ARMS, said once a Most Christian king: now if at that time, his catholic church had called a solemn assembly to unite hearts and voices in this pious prayer, "O blessed Jesus, dear redeeming Lamb of God, who camest down from heaven, to save men's lives, and not destroy them, go along, we humbly pray thee, with our bomb-vessels and fire-ships, suffer not our thundering cannon to roar in vain, but let thy tender hand of love and mercy direct their balls to more heads and hearts of thine own redeemed creatures, than the poor skill of man is able of itself to do": Had not such prayers had more of the man of the earth, more of the son of perdition in them, than the Most Christian king's glorying in his arms?

Again, would you further see the fall of the universal church, from being led by the Spirit of Christ, to be guided by the inspiration of the great fiery dragon, look at all European Christendom sailing round the globe with fire and sword, and every murdering art of war, to seize the possessions, and kill the inhabitants of both the Indies. What natural right of man, what supernatural virtue which Christ brought down from heaven, was not here trodden under foot? All that you ever read or heard of heathen barbarity, was here outdone by Christian conquerors. And to this day, what wars of Christians against Christians, blended with scalping heathens, still keep staining the earth and the seas with human blood, for a miserable share in the spoils of a plundered heathen world! A world, which should have heard, or seen, or felt nothing from the followers of Christ, but a divine love, that

had forced them from distant lands, and through the perils of long seas, to visit strangers with those glad tidings of peace and salvation to all the world, which angels from heaven, and shepherds on earth, proclaimed at the birth of Christ.

Here now, let the wisdom of this world be as wise as ever it will, and from its learned throne condemn all this as enthusiasm; it need be no trouble to anyone, to be condemned by that wisdom, which God himself has condemned as foolishness with him. For the wisdom of this world has all the contrariety to salvation-wisdom, that the flesh has to the spirit, earth to heaven, or damnation to salvation. It is a wisdom, whose spirit and breath keep all the evil that is in fallen man alive, and which in its highest excellence has only the full grown nature of that carnal mind, which is enmity against God. It is a wisdom that is sensual, and devilish, that hinders man from knowing, and dying all those deaths, without which there can be no new life. It is a wisdom that turns all salvation-truths into empty, learned tales, that instead of helping the sinner to confess his sins, and feel the misery that is hid under them, helps him to an art of hiding, nay of defending them. For that which the lusts and passions do contrary to the wisdom from above, is proved to be right reason by this wisdom from below, whose greatest skill is shown, in keeping all the powers and passions of the natural man in peace and prosperity; and so the poor blinded sinner lives and dies in a total ignorance of all that light, blessing, and salvation, which could only be had by a broken and contrite heart. For (N.B.) with respect to conscience, this is the chief office of worldly wisdom; it is to keep all things quiet in the old man, that whether busied in things spiritual, or temporal, he may keep up the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, without any disturbance from religious phantoms, and dreams of mystic idiots, who for want of sober sense and sound learning, think that Christ really meant what he said in these words, “Except a man be born again of the Spirit, or from above, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” For this wisdom, come to its highest perfection, is a classic moral painter, which though it cannot alter the nature, yet can change the colors of everything; it can give to the most heavenly virtue such an outward form and color, as will force the stoutest of aged and learned men to run away from it; and to a vice of the greatest deformity it can pencil such charming features, as will make every child of this world, wish to live and die with it. Its next perfection is that of a flattering orator, who has praise and dispraise at his own free disposal; for as they are all of his own making, so he can dispose them on whom, and on what he will; not only as outward interesting occasions call for them, but also as the inward necessities, the ups and downs of his own poor self want them. For self, however willing to be always strong, has its weak hours, and

would be ever tottering, unless this elbow-orator kept him every day (though perhaps not every night) free from the disturbing whispers of a seed of God in his soul. Now join (if you please) learning and religion to act in fellowship with this worldly wisdom, and make their best of it, and then you will have a depravity of craft and subtlety as high as flesh and blood can carry it, which will bring forth a glittering Pharisee, with a hardness of heart, greater than that of the sinner publican. "Demas," says St. Paul, "hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Here you see all the good and blessing that is inseparable from the wisdom of this world, it always does the same thing, and has the same effect wherever it is; it will do to high and low, learned or unlearned, clergy or laity, that same unavoidably which it did to Demas; it will make them forsake Christ, turn their backs on every grace and virtue of his Holy Spirit, as certainly as the love of the world made Demas to forsake Paul.

This wisdom has asked me, how it is possible for Christian kingdoms in the neighborhood of one another to preserve themselves, unless the strength and weapons of war are everyone's defense, against such invasions, encroachments, and robberies, as would otherwise be the fate of Christian kingdoms from one another.

This question is so far from needing to be answered by me, that it is wholly on my side; it confesses all, and proves all that I have said of the fallen state of Christendom, to be strictly true. For if this is the governing spirit of Christian kingdoms, that no one of them can subsist in safety from its neighboring Christian kingdoms, but by its weapons of war, are not all Christian kingdoms equally in the same unchristian state, as two neighboring bloody knaves, who cannot be safe from one another, but as each other's murdering arms preserve and protect them? This plea therefore for Christendom's wars, proves nothing else but the want of Christianity all over the Christian world, and stands upon no better a foundation of righteousness and goodness, than when one murdering knave kills another that would have killed him.

But to know whether Christianity wants, or admits of war, Christianity is to be considered as in its right state. Now the true state of the world turned Christian, is thus described by the great gospel-prophet, who showed what a change it was to make in the fallen state of the world. "It shall come to pass," says he, "in the last days," that is, in the days of Christendom, "that the mountain of the Lord's house" (his Christian kingdom) "shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all

nations shall flow into it; and many people shall say, Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord's house, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths," Isaiah 2:2.

Now what follows from this going up of the nations to the mountain of the Lord's house, from his teaching them of his ways, and their walking in his paths? The holy prophet expressly tells you in his following words, "They shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up its sword against nation, (N.B.) neither shall they learn war any more." This is the prophet's true Christendom, with one and the same essential divine mark set upon it, as when the Lamb of God said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another as I have loved you." Christ's kingdom of God is nowhere come, but where the works of the devil are destroyed, and men are turned from the power of Satan unto God. God is only another name for the highest and only good; and the highest and only good means nothing else but LOVE with all its WORKS. Satan is only another name for the whole and all of evil, and the whole of evil is nothing else but its whole contrariety to love. And the sum total of all contrariety to love is contained in pride, wrath, strife, self, envy, hatred, revenge, mischief, and murder. Look at these with all their fruits that belong to them, and then you see all the princely power that Satan is, and has in this fallen world.

Would you see when and where the kingdoms of this fallen world are become a kingdom of God, the gospel prophet tells you, that it is then and there where all enmity ceases. "The wolf," says he, "shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. The calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The suckling child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den." For, (N.B.) "they shall not HURT or DESTROY in all my holy mountain," that is, through all holy Christendom, Isaiah 6:6.

See here a kingdom of God on the earth; it is nothing else but a kingdom of mere love, where all HURT and DESTROYING is done away, and every work of enmity changed into one united power of heavenly love. But observe again and again, whence this comes to pass, that God's kingdom on earth is, and can be nothing else, but the power of reigning love; the prophet tells you, it is because in the day of his kingdom, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Therefore, O Christendom, thy wars are thy certain proofs, that thou art all over as full of an ignorance of God, as the waters cover the sea.

As to the present fallen state of universal Christendom, working under the spirit and power of the great fiery dragon, it is not my intention, in anything I am here upon, to show how any part of it can subsist, or preserve itself from being devoured by every other part, but by its own dragon weapons.

But the Christendom which I mean, that neither wants, nor allows war, is only that where Christ is king, and his Holy Spirit the only governor of the wills, affections, and designs of all that belong to it. It is my complaint against, and charge upon all the nations of Christendom, that this necessity of murdering arms is the dragon's monster, that is equally brought forth by all and every part of fallen Christendom; and that therefore all and every part, as well popish as Protestant, are at one and the same distance from the Spirit of their Lord and savior the Lamb of God, and therefore all want one and the same entire reformation.

In these last ages of fallen Christendom, many reformations have taken place; but alas! truth must be forced to say, that they have been in all their variety, little better than so many run-away births of one and the same mother, so many lesser Babels come out of Babylon the great. For among all the reformers, the one only true reformation has never yet been thought of. A change of place, of governors, of opinions, together with new formed outward models, is all the reformation that has yet been attempted.

The wisdom of this world, with its worldly spirit, was the only thing that had overcome the church, and had carried it into captivity. For in captivity it certainly is, as soon as it is turned into a kingdom of this world; and a kingdom of this world it certainly is, as soon as worldly wisdom has its power in it. Not a false doctrine, not a bad discipline, not an usurped power, or corrupt practice ever has prevailed, or does prevail in the church, but has had its whole birth and growth from worldly wisdom.

This wisdom was the great evil root, at which the reforming ax should have been laid, and must be laid, before the church can be again that virgin spouse of Christ, which it was at the beginning. "If any man," says St. Paul, "will be wise, let him become a fool in this world." This admits of no exception, it is a maxim as universal and unalterable, as that which says, "If any man will follow Christ, let him deny himself." For no man has any more to deny than that, which the wisdom and spirit of this world are, and do in him. For all that is in this world, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are the very things in which alone the wisdom of this world lives, and

moves, and has its being. It can be no other, can rise no higher, nor be any better, than they are and do. For as heavenly wisdom is the whole of all heavenly goodness, so earthly wisdom has the whole evil of all the earthly nature.

St. Paul speaks of a natural man, that cannot know the things of God, but to whom they are mere foolishness. This natural man is only another name for the wisdom of this world; but though he cannot know the things that be of God, yet he can know their names, and learn to speak that which the saints of God have spoken about them. He can make profession of them, be eloquent in their praise, and set them forth in such a desirable view, as shall make them quite agreeable to the children of worldly wisdom. This is the natural man, who having got into the church, and church power, has turned the things of God into things of this world. Had this man been kept out of the church, the church had kept its first purity to this day; for its fallen state is nothing else but its fall into the hands of the natural man of this world. And when this is the state of the church, the wisdom of this world (which always loves its own) will be in love with it, will spare no cost to maintain it, will make laws, fight battles in defense of it, and condemn every man as heretical, who dares speak a word against this glorious image of a church, which the wisdom of this world has set up.

This is the great anti-Christ, which is neither better nor worse, nor anything else, but the spirit of Satan working against Christ, in the strength and subtlety of earthly wisdom.

If therefore you take anything to be church-reformation, but a full departure from the wisdom of this world, or anything to be your entrance into a salvation-church, but the nature, Spirit, and works of Christ, become living in you, then, whether papist or Protestant, reformation or no reformation, all will be just as much good to you, as when a Sadducee turns publican, or from a publican becomes a Pharisee. For the church of Christ, as it is the door of salvation, is nothing else but Christ himself.

Christ in us, or we in his church, is the same thing. When that is alive, wills, and works in you, which was alive in Christ, then you are in his church; for that which he was, that must they be who are his. Without this, it matters not what pale you are in. To everything but the new creature, Christ says, "I know you not"; and to every virtue that worldly wisdom puts on, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savorest not the things that be of God."

And the reason why it must be thus, why worldly wisdom, though under a religious form, is and can be nothing else, but that which is called Satan, or anti-Christ, is because all that we are, and have from this world, is that very enmity against God, that whole evil which separates us from him, and constitutes all that death and damnation that belongs to our fallen state.

And so sure as the life of this world is our separation from God, so sure is it, that a total departure from every subtlety and prosperity of worldly wisdom, is absolutely necessary to change an evil son of Adam into a holy son of God.

And here it is well to be observed, that the church of Christ is solely for this end, to make us holy as he is holy. But nothing can do this, but that which has full power to change a sinner into a saint. And he who has not found that power in the church, may be assured that he is not yet a true son of that church. For the church brings forth no other births, but holy children of God; it has no other end, no other nature or work, but that of changing a sinner into a saint. But this can only be done, just as the change of night into day is done, or as the darkness is quite lost in the light.

Something as contrary to the whole nature of sin, as light is to darkness, and as powerful over it, as the light is powerful over darkness, can alone do this. Creeds, canons, articles of religion, stately churches, learned priests, singing, preaching, and praying in the best contrived form of words, can no more raise a dead sinner into a living saint, than a fine system of light and colors can change the night into day. For, (N.B.) that which cannot help you to all goodness, cannot help you to any goodness, nor can that take away any sin but that which can take away all sin.

On this ground it is, that the apostle said, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing"; and on the same ground it must be said, that popery is nothing, and Protestantism is nothing, because all is nothing, as to salvation, but a sinner changed into a saint, or the apostle's new creature. Call nothing therefore your holy, salvation -church, but that which takes away all your sins; this is the only way not to be deceived with the cry about churches, reformations, and divisions. If it be asked, What is meant by taking away all our sins? The whole is fully told us in these words, "To as many as believed, to them he gave power to become sons of God." This is the true taking away, or forgiveness of sins; not a strong imagination, or brain-fancy, that on such an hour, on such a day, or in such a place, you felt and knew assuredly that all your sins were forgiven you: by such a

forgiveness of sins, that which made you a sinner is not destroyed, but you will have every day the same necessity of confessing yourself a miserable sinner, as you had that morning, when your sins were not forgiven you till the afternoon. The true forgiveness of sins is only then, when that which sinned in us is done away, or become powerless in us; but nothing can do this, but that power by which we became sons of God. A blind man has then only a deliverance from his blindness, when he is put in full possession of seeing eyes; this is the only doing away of his darkness. Just so, and no otherwise, are our sins forgiven us, or done away, when the power by which we become sons of God, or the new creature, is so given to us, so possessed by us, as seeing eyes are given to and possessed by the man, who before that was all blindness. And as our old man can only then be said to be truly put off, when the new man in Christ is raised to life in his stead, so our sins are only then truly blotted out, or done away, when an unsinning nature, or a birth of God that sinneth not, is come to be the ruling life in us.

Many are the marks, which the learned have given us of the true church; but be that as it will, no man, whether learned or unlearned, can have any mark or proof of his own true church-membership, but his being dead unto all sin, and alive unto all righteousness. This cannot be more plainly told us, than in these words of our Lord, "He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin"; but surely that servant of sin, cannot at the same time be a living member of Christ's body, or that new creature, who dwells in Christ, and Christ in him. To suppose a man born again from above, yet under a necessity of continuing to sin, is as absurd as to suppose, that the true Christian is only to have so much of the nature of Christ born in him, as is consistent with as real a power of Satan still dwelling in him. "If the son," says Christ, "shall make you free, then ye shall be free indeed." What is this, but saying, if Christ be come to life in you, then a true freedom from all necessity of sinning is given to you. Now if this is hindered, and cannot come to pass in the faithful follower of Christ, it must be, because both the willing and working of Christ in man is too weak to overcome that, which the devil wills and works in him. All this absurdity, and even blasphemy, is necessarily implied in that common doctrine of books and pulpits, which teaches, that the Christian can never have done sinning as long as he lives.

Well therefore may Christendom sleep as securely as it does, under the power of sin, without any thought, hope, or desire of doing God's will on earth, as it is done in heaven; without any concern at their not being pure, as he who has called them is pure, or walking as he walked.

The scripture knows no Christians but saints, who in all things act as becometh saints. But now if the scripture saint did not mean a man that escheweth all evil, and was holy in all his conversation, saint and no saint would have only such difference, as one carnal man will always have from another. Preachers and writers comfort the half Christians with telling them, that God requires not a perfect, sinless obedience, but accepts the sincerity of our weak endeavors instead of it. Here, if ever, the blind lead the blind. For St. Paul, comparing the way of salvation to a race, says, "In a race all run, but ONE obtaineth the prize: so run that ye may obtain."

Now if Paul had seeing eyes, must not they be blind who teach, that God accepts of all that run in the religious race, and requires not that any should obtain the prize. How easy was it to see, that the sincerity of our weak endeavors was quite a different thing from that, which alone is, and can be the required perfection of our lives. The first God accepts, that is, bears with. But why or how? Not because he seeks or requires no more, but he bears with them, because though at a great distance from, they are, or may be making towards that perfection, or new creature, which he absolutely requires, which is the fullness of the stature of Christ, and is that which Paul says, is the ONE that obtains the prize.

The same which Paul says, is said by Christ in other words, "Strive," says he, "to enter in at the strait gate." Here our best endeavors are called for, and therefore accepted by God, and yet at the same time he adds, "that many shall strive to enter in, but shall not be able." Why so, whence comes this? It is because Christ himself is the one door into life. Here the strivers mentioned by Christ, and those which St. Paul calls runners in a race, are the very same persons; and Christ calling himself the one door of entrance, is the same thing as when Paul says, that one only receives the prize, and that one, which alone obtains the prize, or that enters through the right door, is that new creature in whom Christ is truly born. For whether you consider things natural or supernatural, nothing but Christ in us, can be our hope of glory.

The pleader for imperfection further supports himself by saying, No man in the world, Christ excepted, was ever without sin. And so say I too; and with the apostle I also add, "That if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar." But then it is as true to say, that we make him a liar, if we deny the possibility of our ever being freed from a necessity of sinning. For the same Word of God says,

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and (N.B.) to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But surely he that is left under a necessity of sinning as long as he lives, can no more be said to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, than a man who must be a cripple to his dying day, can be said to be cured of all his lameness. What weaker conclusion can well be made, than to infer, that because Christ was the only man that was born and lived free from sin, therefore no man on earth can be raised to a freedom from sinning; no better than concluding, that because the old man is everyone's birth from Adam, therefore there can be no such thing as a new man, created unto righteousness, through Christ Jesus, living and being all in all in him; no better sense or logic, than to say, that because our redeemer could not find us anything else but sinners, therefore he must of all necessity leave us to be sinners.

Of Christ it only can be said, that he is in himself the true vine; but of every branch that is his, and grows in him, it must be as truly said, that the life and spirit of the true vine, is the life and spirit of its branches, and that as is the vine, so are its branches. And here let it be well noted, that if the branch has not the life and goodness of the vine in it, it can only be, because it is broken off from the vine, and therefore a withered branch, fit for the fire.

But if the branches abide in the vine, then Christ says this glorious thing of them, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," John 15:7. The very same glorious thing, which he had before said of himself, "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me," and (N.B.) "I knew that thou hearest me always," John 11:41. Now say that this new creature, who is in such union, communion, and power with God, because Christ is in him, and he in Christ, as really as the vine is in the branches, and the branches in the vine, say that he must be a servant of sin, as long as he lives in this world, and then your absurdity will be as great, as if you had said, that Christ in us must partake of our corruption.

The sober divine, who abhors the pride of enthusiasts, for the sake of humility, says of himself and all men, we are poor, blind, imperfect creatures; all our natural faculties are perverted, corrupted, and out of their right state; and therefore nothing that is perfect can come from us, or be done by us. Truth enough! And the very same truth, as when the apostle says, "The natural man knoweth not the

things that be of God, he cannot know them, they are foolishness to him." This is the man that we all are by nature. But what scripture ever spoke of, or required any perfect works from this man, any more than it requires the Ethiopian to change his skin?

Or what an instructed divine must he be, who considers this old natural man as the Christian, and therefore rejects Christian perfection, because this old man cannot attain to it? What greater blindness, than to appeal to our fallen state, as a proof of a weakness and corruption which we must have, when we are redeemed from it? Is this any wiser, than saying, that sin and corruption must be there where Christ is, because it is there where he is not?

Our Lord has said this absolute truth, that unless we be born again from above, there is no possible entrance into the kingdom of God. What this new birth is in us, and what we get by it, is as expressly told us by his beloved apostle, saying, "That which is born of God sinneth not." This is as true and unalterable, as to say, that which is born of the devil can do nothing else but add sin to sin. To what end do we pray, that "this day we may fall into no sin," if no such day can be had? But if sinning can be made to cease in us for one day, what can do this for us, but that which can do the same tomorrow? What benefit in praying, that "God's will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven," if the earth as long as it lasts must have as many sinners, as it has men upon it? How vainly does the church pray for the baptized person, "that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh," if this victorious triumph can never be obtained; if notwithstanding this baptism and prayer, he must continue committing sin, and so be a servant of sin, as long as he lives? What sense can there be in making a communion of saints to be an article of our creed, if at that same time we are to believe that Christians, as long as they live, must in some degree or other follow, and be led by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?

Whence now comes all this folly of doctrines? It is because the church is no longer that spiritual house of God, in which nothing is intended and sought after, but spiritual power and spiritual life, that is become a mere human building, made up of worldly power, worldly learning, and worldly prosperity in gospel matters. And therefore all the frailties, follies, and imperfections of human nature, must have as much life in the church, as in any other human society. And the best sons of such a church, must be forced to plead such imperfections in the members of it, as must be where the old fallen human nature is still alive. And alive it there must be, and its life defended, where the

being continually moved, and led by the Spirit of God, is rejected as gross enthusiasm. For nothing but a full birth, and continual breathing and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the new born creature, can be a deliverance from all that which is earthly, sensual, and devilish in our fallen nature. This new creature, born again in Christ, of that ETERNAL WORD which created all things in heaven and on earth, is both the rock and church, of which Christ says, "The gates of hell shall never prevail against it." For prevail they will, and must against everything, but the new creature. And every fallen man, be he where he will, or who he will, is yet in his fallen state, and his whole life is a mere Egyptian bondage, and Babylonian captivity, till the heavenly church, or the new birth from above, has taken him out of it.

See how St. Paul sets forth the salvation-church, as being nothing else, and doing nothing else, but merely as the mother of this new birth. "Know ye not," says he, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Here we have the one true church, infallibly described, and yet no other church, but the new creature. He goes on, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection." Therefore to be in Christ, or in his church, belongs to no one, but because the old man is put off, and the new creature risen in Christ, is put on. The same thing is said again in these words, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that (N.B.)

HENCEFORTH we should not serve sin"; therefore the true church is nowhere but in the new creature, that henceforth sinneth not, nor is any longer a servant to sin. Away then with all the tedious volumes of church unity, church power, and church salvation. Ask neither a Council of Trent, nor a Synod of Dort, nor an assembly of divines, for a definition of the church. The apostle has given you, not a definition, but the unchangeable nature of it in these words. But now "being made free from sin, and become servants of God, yet have your fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Therefore to be in the true salvation-church, and to be in Christ that new creature which sinneth not, is strictly the same thing.

What now is become of this true church, or where must the man go, who would fain be a living member of it? He need go nowhere; because wherever he is, that which is to save him, and that

which he is to be saved from, is always with him. SELF is all the evil that he has, and God is all the goodness that he ever can have; but self is always with him, and God is always with him. Death to self is his only entrance into the church of life, and nothing but God can give death to self. Self is an inward life, and God is an inward Spirit of life; therefore nothing kills that which must be killed in us, or quickens that which must come to life in us, but the inward work of God in the soul, and the inward work of the soul in God. This is that mystic religion, which, though it has nothing in it but that same Spirit, that same truth, and that same life, which always was, and always must be the religion of all God's holy angels and saints in heaven, is by the wisdom of this world accounted to be madness. As wisely done, as to reckon him mad, who says, that the vanity of things temporal cannot be, or give life to the things that are eternal; or that the circumcision of the flesh is but as poor a thing, as the whetting of the knife, in comparison of that inward mystic circumcision of the heart, which can only be done by "that WORD of God, which is sharper than any two edged sword, and pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit," Hebrews 4:1. Now fancy to yourself a rabbi-doctor, laughing at this circumcision of the two edged sword of God, as gospel madness, and then you see that very same Christian orthodoxy, which at this day condemns the inward working life of God in the soul, as mystic madness.

Look at all that is outward, and all that you then see, has no more of salvation in it, than the stars and elements. Look at all the good works you can think of, they have no goodness for you, but when the good Spirit of God is the doer of them in you. For all the outward works of religion may be done by the natural man, he can observe all church-duties, stick close to doctrines, and put on the semblance of every outward virtue; thus high he can go. But no Christian, till led and governed by the Spirit of God, can go any higher than this feigned, outward formality of this natural man; to which he can add nothing, but his own natural fleshly zeal in the defense of it. For all zeal must be of this kind, till it is the zeal of that which is born of God, and calls every creature only to that same new birth from above. "My little children," says St. Paul, "of whom I travail again in birth, till Christ be formed in you." This is the whole labor of an apostle to the end of the world. He has nothing to preach to sinners, but the absolute necessity, the true way, and the certain means, of being born again from above. But if dropping this one thing only necessary and only available, he becomes a disputing reformer about words and opinions, and helps Christians to be zealously separated from one another, for the sake of being saved by different notions of faith, works, justification, or election, etc., he has forgot his errand, and is become a blind leader of all, who are blind enough to follow him. For

all that is called faith, works, justification, sanctification, or election are only so many different expressions of that which the restored divine life is, and does in us, and have no existence anywhere, or in anything, but the new creature. And the reason why everything that is, or can be good in us, or to us, is nothing else but this divine birth from above, is because the divine nature dead in Adam, was his entire loss of every divine virtue, and his whole fall under the power of this world, the flesh, and the devil; and therefore the divine nature brought again to life in man, in his faith, his hope, his prayer, his works, his justification, sanctification, election, or salvation. And that ELECTION, which systematical doctors have taken out of its place, and built it into an absolute irreversible decree of God, has no other nature, no other effect, or power of salvation, but that which equally belongs to our faith, hope, prayer, love of God, and love of our neighbor; and just so far as these divine virtues are in us, just so far are we the elect of God, which means nothing else but the beloved of God; and nothing makes us the beloved of God, but his own first image and likeness rising up again in us. Would you plainly know what is meant by being elected of God, the same is plainly meant, as when the scripture says, "God heareth those only who call upon him"; or that he can only be "found by those who seek him"; so he only elects those and that which elect him. Again, "He that honoreth me, him will I honor," says God: "He that loveth me," says Christ, "shall be beloved of me and my Father." This is the mystery of election (N.B.) as it relates to salvation. At divers times and in sundry manners, God may have, and has had his chosen vessels for particular offices, messages, and appointments; but as to salvation from our fallen state, every son of Adam is his chosen vessel, and this as certainly, as that every son of Adam has the seed of the woman, the incorruptible seed of the WORD born along with him; and this is God's unchangeable universal election, which chooses, or wills the salvation of all men. For the ground of all union, communion, or love between God and the creature, lies wholly in the divine nature. That which is divine in man tends towards God, elects God; and God only and solely elects his own birth, nature, and likeness in man. But seeing his own birth, a seed of his own divine nature is in every man, to suppose God by an arbitrary power, willing and decreeing its eternal happiness in some, and willing and decreeing its eternal misery in others, is a blasphemous absurdity, and supposes a greater injustice in God, than the wickedest creatures can possibly commit against one another.

But truth, to the eternal praise and glory of God, will eternally say, that his love is as universal and unchangeable as his being, that his mercy over all his works can no more cease, than his omnipotence can begin to grow weak. God's mark of an universal salvation set upon all mankind,

was first given in these words, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent": therefore wherever the serpent is, there his head is to be bruised.

This was God's infallible assurance, or omnipresent promise, that all that died in Adam, should have its first birth of glory again. The eternal Son of God came into the world, only for the sake of this new birth, to give God the glory of restoring it to all the dead sons of fallen Adam. All the mysteries of this incarnate, suffering, dying Son of God, all the price that he paid for our redemption, all the washings that we have from his all-cleansing blood poured out for us, all the life that we receive from eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, have their infinite value, their high glory, and amazing greatness in this, because nothing less than these supernatural mysteries of a God-man, could raise that new creature out of Adam's death, which could be again a living temple, and deified habitation of the Spirit of God.

That this new birth of the Spirit, or the divine life in man, was the truth, the substance, and sole end of his miraculous mysteries, is plainly told us by Christ himself, who at the end of all his process on earth, tells his disciples, what was to be the blessed, and full effect of it, namely, that the Holy Spirit, the comforter (being now fully purchased for them) should after his ascension, come in the stead of a Christ in the flesh. "If I go not away," says he, "the comforter will not come; but if I go away, I will send him unto you, and he shall guide you into all truth." Therefore all that Christ was, did, suffered, dying in the flesh, and ascending into heaven, was for this sole end, to purchase for all his followers a new birth, new life, and new light, in and by the Spirit of God restored to them, and living in them, as their support, comforter, and guide into all truth. And this was his,

***"LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."* FINIS.**

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